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# ALTRUISM

*Moral Education for Daily Life*

BY

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Ferozepore City*

1987

**DEV SAMAJ PRAKASHAN**  
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*Dedicated*  
*to*  
*The Youth of the World*  
*in*  
*Love and Gratitude*



## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The moral problems of man began as soon as he refused to walk on four, and refused to live alone, for moral problems are primarily the problems of human conduct in group relationships. Since conduct is motivated, the moral problem consists in proper interpretation and control of human motives. What is a motive? What is a good motive? What is a bad motive? How do they originate, grow and develop? What measures can be healthy to check the development of evil motives? What is the moral hygiene for development of the most desirable motives? These and such others are the problems for Psychology, Sociology, Ethics and Religion.

The approach to the study of human motives and human ideals can be empirical or scientific, or supernatural or transcendental. Here the first approach is made. M.M.P. Shri S.N. Agnihotri, devotedly called 'Dev Atma', has built up his philosophy of human personality on scientific foundations. He has laid bare the structure of human motives and analysed the causes and conditions of their degradation and elevation. It is this *secular and empirical* ethical philosophy of the Master that his great and distinguished disciple, Principal P.V. Kanak puts forward for the illumination and inspiration of his readers.

The ethical philosophy of the Master and His life produced wonderful results in human adjustments. They have been instrumental in building a new Society of Dev Samaj whose chief concern is the nurture of human personality, free from evil loves, and full of altruistic loves. This Society has made interesting experiments in right living in relation to all the four kingdoms of Nature.

Principal P.V. Kanak was faced with task of how to apply the philosophy of his Master for the inspiration of the replenishing mass of school and college adolescents who were under his charge as Principal of different institutions. He brought artistic vision to this task. Just as children love stories from animal life, adolescents love stories from human life. Adolescence is a period of insatiable love for stories of human drama. For it,

therefore, moral truths, must live in the concrete, in the lives of men and women about and around them.

This method of presenting moral truths through social drama had phenomenal success for him. Students waited for his period of moral inspiration, for he touched their hearts and illumined their minds with moral truths from stories of daily life. This success inspired him to write down his talks with students. They were written at different periods during several years. Generally he wrote them soon after his discussion with students, which he found worth noting. Hence the book does not have the logical structure of contents. It has not the unity of a canal dug out to a set plan. It has the unity of a vast river, which goes on creating its unity as it chalks out new pathways in its irresistible march. These talks were first printed in the journal of the society—*The Science-Grounded Religion*—which he edited. However, we have tried to give talks a unity of conventional type by rearranging them.

"*Altruism*", the title of the book, is used in the same extensive sweep as 'justice' is used by Plato. It is the axis round which the whole problem of human life and conduct revolves. It is that which runs through the whole circuit of moral life.

*Altruism* was first printed in parts. The press found them to be invaluable for the moral education of the adolescents no less than of adults. On the issue of the first part *The Guardian*, Madras wrote :

"The lessons . . . are impressive, very realistic and simple . . . *What Aesop's Fables do with fables, these lessons do with illustrations from life.* Their influence as moral teaching goes as far as *any teaching can go.*"

The famous *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta received it thus :

"It goes without saying that these instructions are as *ennobling as solacing*. Teachings contain actual instances from life. They make them all the more impressive."

*The Leader*, Allahabad was struck with the fact that "the nature of moral instructions is *not determined by any narrow sectarian considerations.*" It further says, "The emphasis on the cultivation of altruistic virtues is *not because they are enjoined by any dogmatic creed* but because they make for harmony and solidarity etc. etc." It pleads that the parts deserve to be given

*"the more permanent shape of a book . . . because of their intrinsic worth."*

*The Bombay Chronicle*, Bombay, enthusiastically remarked :—

*"The talks disclose a good understanding of a child mind and are well calculated to bring out the best that is in the child and to train and mould character by explaining high moral precepts and showing how they can be converted into actual practice in the common affair of mankind. It can with advantage be placed in the hands of every child and should prove a useful help to parents and teachers."*

This books touches the humblest and the greatest problems that confront the adolescent and the adult in adjustment to himself, the society, his mate and the universe, and makes a permanent contribution to the moral wisdom of mankind. It is written with the realism of the scientist, the sensitiveness of the artist and under the light of the Master that was never before on land and sea.

We are happy to bring out the second reprint of the book in the context of the problem of value orientation of education which is engaging the attention of educationists throughout the world. Here is a significant sample of education of value experimented to success.

There is no attempt to arrange the topics in relation to different age groups. It is for the teacher to use the material in organising his moral lessons. It has mines of moral wisdom to be picked up to one's needs and to one's fill.

This saga of moral life is offered by Dev Samaj as its humble contribution to value education of the world, especially of our countrymen.

December 17, 1986

PUBLISHER

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST BOOK

The Dev Samaj is primarily devoted to the evolution of moral and altruistic forces in the hearts of men. The Dev Samaj believes that by the development of these character forces, alone the problem of human relationship can be solved. Man needs to be awakened to the most transparent fact that he is a part of humanity. Hence he owes definite duties and obligations to it, the satisfactory performance of which would not only reduce a lot of misery from which the world suffers, but would also take him nearer to the realisation of his better and higher self. The Dev Samaj teaches that the goal of man is not the solution of his economic and political problems. His goal, as is made obvious by his own make-up of life, is to gain knowledge about his true self, get freedom from all such forces based on self-love which lead him to trample the rights of others under foot and so offend against truth and goodness, as also to develop all such moral and higher forces which can lead him to find his highest satisfaction in the promotion of the welfare of others and harmonising his life with whatever is true and good in all relations.

Keeping the realization of this true goal of man as the main plank of its good work, the Dev Samaj tackles human life from its very infancy right up to his old age. In all its schools and colleges it has kept as its foremost object, the development of moral and higher consciousness in man. One whole period is set apart each day for this most essential work.

The world is often curious to know what we teach in that period. It has, therefore, been decided to compile some of the moral lessons delivered by us in our institutions.

The first ten lessons are being presented to the public in a book form. More will follow. We feel confident that this book would serve the public in this most important line of character-building particularly among the children, whose life it touches in the various relations.



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND BOOK

Last year the Dev Samaj published the first book of the serial on Altruism. We feel thankful to see that it met with warm appreciation and welcome from the public. Some of the educationists interested in the building of the character of the youths of our land made a strong appeal through the press that every home should have a copy of it. We express our deep gratitude to them.

The second book consists of ten more moral lessons. We have every hope that this book too would give the same satisfaction and meet with the same appreciation as its predecessor.

*Altruism* is, in fact, a collection and compilation of such of the moral teachings as are being imparted in various institutions of the Dev Samaj. The Dev Samaj believes and teaches that, as feelings are the mainspring of various activities of man in his various relations, the cultivation of higher feelings would alone not only better and humanize the nature of man but would also solve the problem of his relationships. Life of man in relations is bitter because his feelings by which he is moved are low and selfish. The life of man in relations can be sweet only to the extent that he gets freedom from his selfish and debasing feelings and develops higher or altruistic feelings. In all its institutions the Dev Samaj is primarily devoted to this noble task. These more lessons that we publish would give our readers an idea of the lines on which we work.

This side of the work of the Dev Samaj has proved eminently successful in bettering the lives of the boys and the girls coming to our institutions and bringing about sweetness and concord in their various relations. Lots of parents have, from time to time, conveyed their sense of indebtedness to the Dev Samaj for the marvellous changes brought about in the lives of their children by this phase of the work of the Dev Samaj.

The author would feel amply paid for his labours if the valuable truths contained in these moral lessons serve their true purpose of improving and elevating the minds of the youths. With such wishes and such a prayer we place this brochure before the public.

P.V. KANAL

## PREFACE TO THE THIRD BOOK

The warm reception accorded to the first two books of *Altruism* has encouraged us to publish the third book and place it before the public. Like its two predecessors it also deals with matters of everyday life of us human beings. Like its two predecessors, it is free from every tinge of sectarianism or denominationalism. Our appeal is to the common sense, reason and higher nature of man.

There are still ninety lessons waiting to be published in nine more such parts dealing with various truths about human personality and touching on different moral puzzles of human life.

The foremost aim kept by Dev Samaj in its moral teachings is to make higher life a matter of real and earnest quest for the rising generation. We believe that humanity will be delivered of its incessant pangs of useless and tragic sufferings only through its realization of the highest moral values.

We shall be amply paid if these humble brochures help to raise the moral outlook on life of any of our readers and help to solve any of his tangles.

1st April, 1944.

P.V. KANAL

## PREFACE TO THE FOURTH BOOK

The first three books of *Altruism* have to our great joy, received a very happy and warm welcome. This has encouraged us to issue the fourth book. It consists of ten lessons.

Our attempt in this serial has been mainly to deal with such higher feelings as help humanity to live noble and peaceful life in various relations. It has also been our effort to tackle with such problems as meet individuals at every step and look sometimes insoluble owing to lack of light of requisite knowledge. It has also been our effort to awaken the young and the old to the faith in better, higher or altruistic life and a consciousness of the value and importance of higher character forces. We believe and declare that the most precious treasure of every man is his noble character, and higher character alone exalteth races and nations.

There are *eight* more book of the serial waiting to be printed. We would very much appreciate if some philanthropists can undertake to publish some or all the rest of the them for the highest good of the public.

P.V. KANAL

## PREFACE TO THE FIFTH BOOK

This is the fifth book that we present to our readers of the big serial of twelve books which we have completed and published in the columns of *The Science-Grounded Religion*. We are thankful to the public for the warm welcome they have accorded to the first four books of this serial. We hope and fervently desire that this book may also receive at the hands of readers the same warm appreciation.

This book consists of ten more lessons on the need of moral and higher life. There has been a demand for a kind of literature which may be free from doctrinal embarrassment and deal purely with the gospel of the need and importance of moral and higher life. We have strictly avoided dogmas and tried to show and emphasize the value and necessity of better behaviour in relation to human and animal worlds.

The greatest problem in the world is the human problem. Higher adjustment of men with humanity and sub-human kingdoms is the pressing problem of the modern age. We have had upto now any number of dogmas, creeds and sects, which claim to have solved human problem. But it has been found to the greatest bewilderment of mankind that sects and dogmas have produced greater complications and rendered human problem almost insoluble.

We have tried to analyse human nature and deal with those heart forces which have uptil now created a lot of maladjustment and misery. We have also tried to show the nature of those heart forces which are urgently needed to produce higher harmony in various relations. In a word, we have tried to deal with the problem of successful art of life. We hope and trust that this book also would tend to the betterment of man's relations with others.

1st December, 1946.

P.V. KANAL



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**"DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WISH TO BE  
DONE BY"**

A STUDENT. Sir, will you please tell us why we should become good boys ?

TEACHER. Dear boy, there are one thousand and one reasons why we should become good. And there is no reason at all why we should be evil.

A STUDENT. Will you kindly give us some reasons ?

TEACHER. One of the reasons is, "Do unto others as you wish to be done by." Let me explain this. Can any of you tell me if he feels happy, when any of his precious things is stolen ?

From the whole class there was a cry of 'No, No, Sir.'

TEACHER. We do not wish our precious things to be stolen, because the loss of our things makes us miserable. In the same way, the loss of the precious things of others must cause them misery. Let me give you a story. There was a beggar-woman who had laid by her savings and tied them in a loose end of her dress. A pick-pocket saw this, and when she was lying fast asleep on the roadside, he quietly picked it off. When the poor beggar-woman woke up and found her savings gone, she rolled on the ground in agony and wept bitter tears. The spectators around her could not bear the sight. Some of them gave her some cash, but that did not amount to her savings and so, for hours she was found writhing in agony. This was the terrible misery that the thief caused to that poor beggar-woman. Now, if we could bring before our mental eye her misery and by the help of imagination put ourselves in her place, it would be hardly possible for us to steal. It is said that people do not learn a lesson even from their own bitter experience.

A STUDENT. Sir, I understand why theft is bad. It produces a lot of undue misery for others. I know how un-

happy I felt when my book was stolen. And my own unhappiness taught me a lesson that I should not steal. Are there any persons who fail to learn a lesson even from such a bitter experience ?

TEACHER. There are millions who do not learn even by their own personal experience. A *tehsildar* who held land in a place outside his jurisdiction had to see a *patwari* (lowest revenue officer) of that place in this connection. The *patwari* demanded some bribes from him. The *tehsildar* got simply furious. He said to the *patwari*, "Don't you know that I am a *tehsildar* ?" The *patwari* said, "Sir, you may be a *tehsildar*, but don't you yourself take bribes ? And if it is a good thing for you to take bribes, why should it be bad in my case ? You must pay me what is my due as bribe, if you want your job to be done." This *tehsildar* was aware that I knew him to be one of the terrible bribes-takers and yet he had the cheek to abuse the *patwari* in my presence ! The thief thinks that he alone has got the privilege of stealing and producing misery for others, while he wants the entire world to be honest to him. Thus there are persons who never learn a lesson even from their own experience. Such men are really moral imbeciles.

A STUDENT. Sir, you have given us some examples of dishonest dealings only. Will you please give us examples of various other kinds of sins and crimes also ?

TEACHER. Yes. I will give you some actual instances from real life. It was only a fortnight ago that I was crossing a road with a companion of mine when a man rode by on a cycle. He offered salutations to my companion. I asked my companion as to who the man was. He said : "He is one of those moral imbeciles who do not learn even from their own bitter experience. This man had enticed away the daughter of a respectable family from a village where he used to live. He had to run away from the village. During his absence, which was long and continued, his grown up daughter fell under the influence of a bad young man who enticed her away. As soon as this bad man came to know that his own daughter had been enticed away, he broke down and sobbed. He went and brought his daughter home. But in

spite of all this personal bitter experience of how an assault on his own honour broke his nerve, he still persists in committing the crime of ruining the homes of others." When I learnt all this, I was really sorry how some people grow so very perverted and callous that they mercilessly inflict misery on others when they abhor it in their own case.

A STUDENT. But, Sir, are there no men who learn from their own experience ?

TEACHER. Yes, there are some. And they are of two types. First, there are those in whom bitter experience causes loss of courage to do wrong again. But they do not become moral. Secondly, there are others who can change for the better and become really moral.

A STUDENT. Sir, will you please give us instances to illustrate both these types ?

TEACHER. Yes. There was a young man. He was in the habit of going up the highest storey of his house at night and throwing torchlight on women who were sleeping on the roofs of the neighbouring houses. He was a married man and yet he had no respect for the honour of others. The neighbours approached him with a prayer that he should give up this nasty habit. As this young man was a powerful man and some of those who approached him were very weak, he did not mind their request. These poor people complained to some of the neighbours who were men of position. The respectable neighbours went and talked to the young man on the subject. They found to their pain that he was indifferent to their appeals. This young man used to be absent from home on duty between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. As a last resort the offended neighbours started to stand on the roofs of their houses during these hours and began to pay that young man's wife in the same coin, by harassing her. They would call her names and ask her to come out. If she would come and sit in the open they would stand staring at her. After two or three days the young wife complained to her husband. It was then that sense seemed to have come to this thoughtless man. He approached his neighbours to desist from standing on the roofs of their houses and staring at his wife. They said, "We have every right to stand on our own

roofs. Do what you please!" When the young man found the entire neighbourhood against him, he had to give up his residence and shifted to another quarter. He did not improve in character but he had to give up troubling his neighbours. He did not view his conduct as nefarious. But some change did come in him. He learnt a lesson that, in order to be a good neighbour, one had to respect the feelings of his neighbours.

A STUDENT. Sir, I am very much impressed by this instance. I am sorry that the man did not give up his evil life, but I am glad that he learnt to be a good neighbour. I feel that it is highly desirable to become a good neighbour if one has to live in peace. But are there men who give up an evil course of life through bitter personal experience?

TEACHER. Yes, there are. Their number, however, is small. There used to be a barrister who was a married man. He was immoral. Whenever he returned from the court, he would go to a mistress of his and come home at odd hours. He never felt that he was disloyal to his wife and that he was wounding her susceptibilities. The wife was very much worried over this and she felt her unfaithful husband to be a constant source of misery to her. One day she made up her mind to take a resolute step. As soon as her husband returned home late at night, she took up a lantern and made for the gate of the house. The husband asked her where she was going. She said: "I am going to have a gay time as you had." The husband simply grew pale and ran to her and said: "How dare you become so shameless?" The woman replied: "My beloved husband, the wife of a shameless husband should not be expected to be anything better. I am simply following in your footsteps. I am introducing no innovation. You should be happy that your darling wife is imitating your noble example!" The husband knew that his wife was in earnest. With folded hands he told her: "Beloved wife, not all the sermons in the world would have shown me the ugliness of my life as your bold stand and frank words have done. Believe me, from to-day I am a new man. Please come back. Let us not break the home." From that day the barrister became a model husband. So,

boys, here is the case of a man who had some sense left in him. And he improved.

Here the boys cheered the teacher and said, "Sir, we thank you for having given us the practical illustrations to carry home to us the truth that we must do unto others as we wish to be done by. We desire that you kindly talk to us about several other wrongs which we must avoid in the light of the above maxim.

TEACHER. I now want to give you some of the instances from the lives of students. Once in our boarding house there used to live a very tall and robust student. It was a rule of our boarding house that whenever any student fell ill, other students volunteered for night duties. This boy always refused to take up the duty at any hour of the night to nurse a sick friend. One day he himself fell ill. The students came to me and said: "Sir, that young man, who avoids taking duties, has fallen ill. What should we do?" I said: "Serve him whole-heartedly so that he may have personal experience of how helpful the service of friends to a sick man is." The boys vied with one another in nursing him. When this young man recovered from his illness, he came to me. With tears in his eyes he said: "I have always been a selfish brute. I never realised how we need each other's help. Kindly excuse me for my past mean selfishness and in future give me the hardest duty to serve the sick. I have realised the need of serving others." This young man was thus saved from one aspect of his selfish life and I am glad to tell you that he was always one of the most earnest volunteers for the service of the sick. This is how some men become better through personal experience.

A STUDENT. Sir, we are thankful to you for giving us this instance. I know how and why I should serve my sick friends and relations. Will you kindly give us any other example of any other student?

TEACHER. I can give a lot of examples of students who became better because they had to pass through a personal experience. In a co-educational institution a young man had the bad habit of staring at girls. Some of

the girls took exception to it. But no change came in the conduct of the boy. It so happened that next year his own sister also joined the same college. His sister complained to him that some boys were staring at her constantly. The boy got furious. But he remembered how he himself had proved a nuisance to some girls. As soon as this thought flashed in his mind, he grew penitent and realised what an unhappy time he must have given to those girls. He had the courage to go to those girls and apologize to them. In course of time, he turned into an ideal boy and he and his sister were the most respected students in the college. Thus a new change came in the life of that young man. My dear young boys, you should also realize that as you do not want others to become a nuisance to your sisters and mothers, so you should avoid becoming a nuisance to other boys' sisters and mothers. Don't you think, then, that if a man were to put himself in the position of another whom he wrongs, he would if anything good is left in his soul, take the course of conduct which is not only inoffensive but, if possible, useful and of service to others ? I hope our today's talk would give you some inkling into the reason why we should become good and why we should become inoffensive.

## BE CONSIDERATE TO OTHERS

On the next day, when the boys met in the moral instruction period, there was some change in the atmosphere. Some of the boys seemed very anxious to ask new questions. One of them, therefore, said: "Sir, I can understand the approach to morality from the point of view of the maxim, 'Do unto others as you wish to be done by'. Will you please teach us in the light of that maxim what should be our behaviour in various relations?"

TEACHER. I am glad to see that you find some interest in the problem why we should become good. The approach to this problem can be made from various other perspectives. Let me illustrate to you how the ignoring of certain moral principles makes us prove a source of unhappiness to others.

When I was a student, I read two stories which left their permanent impress upon my mind. It is said that in a mountainous place there was a bridge which was so narrow and risky that only one person could walk over it at a time with difficulty. If any man lost his balance and fell down, he was dashed to pieces, as the valley underneath was very deep. One day villagers saw that two goats entered the same bridge from opposite sides. Both the goats were young and aggressive. When they came to the middle they began to push one another back. The result was that both fell down and were instantly killed. Now, boys, tell me where lay the mistake?

A STUDENT. Sir, their mistake lay in driving each other back and not in helping each other.

TEACHER. Let me tell you the other story and the point will become more clear. On the same bridge two other goats came from opposite sides. One of the goats lay down on the path and allowed the other to walk over

him. When the other goat safely crossed him, he got up and went his way. The villagers who saw this sight were very much surprised and when both goats had safely crossed the passage they cheered them. Now, you can see here that in the second case the goat that lay down to let the other goat cross over him showed a spirit of accommodation. By showing such a spirit in relation to the other goat, he not only made matters easy for him but made the passage safe for himself too. Thus by a little consideration for the other, he saved his own life and that of the other goat. In the former case, however, both the goats lacked that spirit of consideration or accommodation with the result that both of them paid with their lives. Now, if we want safety or comfort for ourselves at the hands of others, we should realize that others also long for the same safety and the same comfort at our hands. We should gladly extend to others what we wish for ourselves from others. The observance of such a spirit would prove to be the end of millions of our troubles.

A STUDENT. Sir, we are very much impressed by the action of the goat in the latter case. Would you kindly give us some examples from our social life also?

TEACHER. Yes, boys, I am going to give you an example of a real life incident which has been recorded. It is as follows:

A famine broke out in a certain village. The big landlord of that place was deeply affected by the sight of misery and he, therefore, opened a *langar* or common kitchen and used to provide each member of every family with a big substantial loaf. All the peasants and villagers used to come at a particular hour and there used to be terrible pushing and elbowing by those present in order to have the loaf first. The *zamindar* was surprised to see that though there was so much hustle and bustle, pushing and elbowing, there was a girl who would never enter the melee but would silently stand at a corner and when all the persons had received their loaves, she would come for the last loaf. Generally, the last loaf used to be a small one. When the *zamindar* witnessed this sight for a num-



ber of days, he was struck by the girl's patience and spirit of self-denial. One day, he gave her a loaf in which he had put a gold coin. When the girl reached home and gave that loaf to her mother, she found the coin and asked her daughter if the *zamindar* had given the coin to her. The girl said that the coin was not meant for her and that she would go and return it to the generous donor. She went to the *zamindar's* house and placed the coin on his table and humbly said, "Sir, I found this gold coin in the loaf. As it was not intended for me and was put there by mistake I respectfully return it to you." The *zamindar* said, "My child, this gold coin was intended for you. I have been impressed by your great patience and your spirit of self-denial. From to-day you will always have the best loaf from my kitchen."

Here is a case of a human being who had the courage to deny herself the early receipt of a big loaf in the interest of others. The little considerateness for others won her not only her own peace of mind but also blessings from others.

A STUDENT. This is a beautiful example, Sir. But how should we apply it in our own case?

TEACHER. Boys, I have several times observed that when I come to the class, most of you make a rush for the front seats. Some of you jostle each other, elbow out each other and even refuse a seat to another when it is available on the bench. This shows that you have no spirit of accommodation or consideration for others. When you make the rush for the front seats you forget that others also want the first seat. If everyone of you were to think of others and offer his seat to them, there will be no mad rush, no trampling upon one another, no kicking and elbowing, no disturbance and no unrest. Is it not so?

A STUDENT. This is the general rule with us, Sir. And I feel sorry for it. Will you kindly show us the ugly side of this?

TEACHER. By all means. I, as a rule, travel third class. I have learnt one great lesson in life. It is that when I have paid for one seat, I should not occupy two at the

cost of another. Hence when I get a seat, I am content. No thought occurs to me of refusing admittance into the compartment to another. This has given me great peace of mind during railway travel. But I have seen that forgetfulness of this small lesson lands passengers into great troubles. They become tyrants. Once I took a seat in a small railway compartment which was meant for thirteen or fourteen passengers. We were only five passengers when at a junction station another big burly passenger wanted to get into that compartment. My four fellow-passengers did not like any other passenger to come in. They, therefore, blocked the passage and refused admittance to that new passenger. The new passenger had a giant constitution. He gave a mighty push to the door and all the four passengers fell down. He then got into the compartment and bolted it from inside. He rebuked the four passengers very much and he even said, "Men, did you not realize that by this beastly behaviour you would have made me miss the train."

I thought that the man had had a bitter experience of the spirit of non-accommodation found in those four passengers and he himself would naturally hate to be so non-accommodating. But, boys, I was extremely astonished that after an hour or so, when the train was about to stop at another big station, he got up and said to us, "Don't worry. Now I am here. I shall see that no other passenger gets in." He was true to his unholy word and successfully refused accommodation to all the passengers who wanted to get in and this he did against the railway rules and against the code of gentlemanly behaviour. This spirit disturbed even his own peace of mind, because at every station he had to get up and serve as a sentinel. You can thus see how this spirit of non-consideration for others makes a man himself unhappy and also makes him a source of misery to others. He did not wish the world to close the door against him, but he was willing and ready to close it in the face of the world. It is this spirit of non-accommodation, which has made railway travel a very great trial for third class passengers, at least in the Punjab, for everyone

wants the entire compartment to himself, which is an impossible thing.

BOYS. Sir, this is simply horrible !

TEACHER. Come, I shall narrate a personal case. It was only a fortnight ago that I got a ticket to travel by bus. The bus was full but there was accomodation for one man on a bench which was occupied by four passengers. The bench was intended for five. The proprietor of the bus asked the four passengers to give me a seat. Two highly educated gentlemen dressed in the most modern fashion with clean-shaven faces, gave me some space on the bench which was not sufficient for even a boy of ten to occupy. When I sat there, I was very uncomfortable. Had they given me one seat which they could have very easily spared, my journey would have been easy. But I found that not only did they not like to give me a full seat but they felt that I was a trespasser even for the one-fourth of a single seat which they had graciously given to me. I found that both for my own peace of mind and that of theirs, I should just sit on the floor of the bus. I immediately put that idea into practice. Do you know what these gentlemen said when I sat on the floor ? They said, "You have done well in sitting on the floor, Sir ; we were very uncomfortable."

BOYS. This was indeed a highly shameless conduct.

TEACHER. I am glad that you are able to see that it was a shameless conduct on the part of those people. But would you feel the selfsame when *you* exhibit it in relation to *your* classmates ? We possess an uncanny sense of judgement when condemning others. But we are over-generous to ourselves in all our faults and foibles. Let me give you a true story which I heard in a boarding house which I happened to visit. I conducted a meeting on moral instruction there. One of the boys got up and related the following story in which he also was an actor. He said:

"Sir, only about ten or fifteen days ago, we inmates of the hostel did something which, I feel now, after listening to you, to be most disgraceful. It is a rule of our kitchen that all of us must dine together. Our cook distributes all the preparations equally among all of us. We are 24 boarders. On a

certain day, one boy was absent and neither the cook nor any one of us noticed that he was absent. When we were about to take our share, placed before us, we saw him coming. He was as hungry as any one of us. It would have been sheer justice to the boy if every one of us had shared our food with him. But we selfish boys did not care for our fellow student. We hurriedly started taking our meals because you know that once you partake of a dish, the remainder is forbidden food for others. The result was that our own fellow student and fellow boarder went without a meal and we were happy !” That dear boy was moved to tears while relating the incident.

Now, my boys, you can realize to what lengths the want of our spirit of considerateness for others leads us. How many among you ever realize that you are doing the same thing ? I have heard that sometimes the boarders who are served first, leave nothing of a good dish for those that follow. Because you find the dish delicious, therefore, you go on calling for more and more, ignoring even the cook’s warning that nothing would be left for others. If you can realize that such a conduct really degrades us and makes us prove harmful to our nearest and dearest, to our friends and fellow students, to our kith and kin, to our neighbours and fellow citizens, you would see the horror of it and agree with me that development of the spirit of considerateness for others is highly desirable. Absence of any considerateness for others makes a man not only a brute but an impossible being. I hope this much would suffice for to-day. Let me hope that next time when we meet, you would try to get more and more information and light upon your behaviour in various relations, for morality and goodness have their basis in human relations.

## CONSIDERATENESS FOR PARENTS

When the class met again for the moral instruction period one of the students got up and said : "Sir, in the last lesson you gave a discourse on a certain mental attitude, i.e. considerateness for others. I like this method of approach to the problem of why should we become good. Will you please explain this more fully by citing incidents from real life ?

TEACHER. Yes, my dear young friend, I am ready to approach the problem from this view-point. You will understand it better if I give you a story from real life. There was a widower who had four daughters—all of them grown up. He was anxious to get them married and settled. There was a young man, very rich and good-natured, who, he thought, would make a very suitable match for any one of his daughters. He encouraged this young man to visit his house and make his choice. One day, the father of the girls purchased tickets for a play and invited this young man to join them. When they were about to leave for the theatre, he found that he was short by one ticket. Perhaps he had not counted himself when he sent for the tickets. As all the seats in that theatre were booked two or three days in advance, he had to leave one of his daughters behind. Now it was a problem as to who was going to make a sacrifice. The three elder daughters kept silent but the youngest came forward and said : "Father, I am going to stay away, I can never enjoy a play if I know that any one of my sisters is left behind." The father naturally felt relieved when he saw his youngest daughter coming to his help. The young man marked this and he wanted to make sure whether the girl's offer of self-denial was genuine or a mere pose. He, therefore, left the theatre on a pretext, just to find out how the girl had taken her voluntary sacrifice. When he came to

her house, he found her seated at her piano and playing a very happy tune. He then quietly returned to the theatre. When the play was over and all of them returned home the young man went to the father in his study room and told him that he had decided to ask him for the hand of his youngest daughter and that he would feel grateful to him if he accepted his proposal. The father was happy to see that after all the young man had decided to marry one of his daughters. He said : "My son, it will be a real joy to me if you marry my youngest daughter. But you have also to consult her. I know she will accept you but, all the same, you must make a formal proposal to her," The young man then went to the girl. He told her that he had her father's consent to propose to her and that he would feel grateful if she accepted him. "I not only love you but I revere you," he said, "And I know and feel that the only girl who can make my life happy is you." The girl promptly replied, "I feel honoured by your proposal. In other circumstances, I would have considered it my highest good fortune that a noble young man like you should have settled his affections on me. But you know my mother is dead. I am sure that my three sisters are going to marry and leave my father. He will then be alone. I cannot afford to leave him as long as he is alive, as there will be no one else to serve him." The young man was taken aback and said : "I even offer to come and live here with you under your father's roof after my marriage so that you may serve us both." She said : "That is not possible. As your wife, I shall not be able to pay that undivided attention to my father which I can pay to him while I am unmarried. I am afraid I cannot sacrifice my father for my own happiness." The young man understood the finality in her voice and went and reported the matter to her father. The father knew his daughter's temperament and, therefore, did not press the matter further. In course of time, the three elder sisters married and left. It was after some years that the father had a fall from his horse and died and it was then that the girl agreed to marry that young man. Now, boys, tell me what strikes you in this story ?

A STUDENT. What impresses me, Sir, in the story of

this girl is that sacrifice was a matter of joy to her. She was happy when she stayed behind when all the rest had left for the theatre. She was happy when she sacrificed the immediate prospects of marriage in order to serve her father. She never seemed to have considered sacrifice as a trial.

TEACHER. Indeed, you have hit the mark. In fact, a life of sacrifice which gives no joy is not a virtue. It is the ungrudging and willing sacrifice which can make us virtuous. Can you tell me now for whom did she make that sacrifice ?

A STUDENT. Sir, she sacrificed her interests in the first case for her sisters and in the second case for her father.

TEACHER. Do you consider sacrifice to be a good thing?

A CHORUS OF VOICES – Yes please, yes please.

TEACHER. If all of you were to learn to find joy in making sacrifices for your brothers and sisters and father and mother, your homes would be castles impregnable to the attacks of all enemies. It is said that this spirit of sacrifice is, as a rule, conspicuous by its absence.

A STUDENT. How is it, Sir, that you say that this spirit of sacrifice is absent in us ?

TEACHER. Boys, I don't want to be personal by quoting examples from the life of any of you. Let me give you some examples and then you can judge your conduct in the light of these instances.

When I was studying at Bombay, there was a club-mate of mine. The maximum expenditure in that club for lodging and boarding was Rs. 25 per month. Most of us did not send for more than Rs. 35 or Rs. 40, but this young man got 125 rupees a month. He would spend Rs. 2 per day on fruits alone. It was not what he needed. To impress others with his dignity, he would invite unnecessarily one or another of his friends and feast him. His object was to pass for the son of a raja. Whenever anybody called him a prince, he would simply burst with joy. He feasted on flattery and never cared how much it cost his father to meet his bills. Do you think that this boy had any feeling for his father ?

A STUDENT. None, Sir.

TEACHER. Let me give you another example to make the attitude of a son clear.

There was a student in one of the colleges at Lahore. His father was a big merchant. He used to provide his son with more than Rs. 125 a month. The boy wanted to live up to his reputation as a very wealthy boy. He was more anxious to enjoy this reputation among his friends than to think of his father. As chance would have it, his father's firm failed. In his changed circumstances, the father was not able to meet the exorbitant demands of his son. He, therefore, took a gentleman, who was my friend, to his son and revealed to him his changed financial position and requested him to send for only Rs. 60 per month. My friend told me that the boy simply got furious and told his father that he was not prepared to live in the college as the son of an insolvent. My friend further told me that the boy's father actually placed his turban at the feet of his son and wept and prayed to him that he should not give up his studies but should continue them. The boy was obdurate. Here is the case of a boy who could sacrifice his father to his meanest desire of keeping up a false show of riches. How do you appreciate this story ?

A STUDENT. Sir, the boy's conduct was simply reprehensible. Such a son does not deserve to be called a son.

TEACHER. Let me give you another instance of a boy who used to live in our boarding house. He was the son of a station master drawing Rs. 60 per month. When the father came to me to get his son admitted, I told him definitely that he should never send to his son more than Rs. 25 per month, and if his son demanded anything more in any month, he should report the matter to me. The father came to me after about fourteen month. I told him that his son had made no progress in his studies. He then said, "Sir, my son has been sending for Rs. 40 a month for the last several months." I was simply taken aback. I said, "Babu Sahib, did I not definitely tell you that you should never send your son more than Rs. 25 ? Why did you send him Rs. 40 without so much as informing me ?" He said, "The boy wrote to me that he was weak in



Sanskrit and that he had kept a tutor." I told him that his son had simply cheated him. I called the boy and confronted him before his father. The boy had to admit that he had kept no tutor. At this, his aged father actually wept and showed me his patched pants, saying, "Sir, this is how I am making sacrifices for him. If you see his mother, she, too, has similar patches on her worn out clothes. We have both been denying ourselves even ordinary wants, not to speak of luxury, in the hope that this son of ours would one day get educated and be well-settled in life." To my utter dismay I found the son not only unrepentant but even arrogant. His selfishness had so hardened his heart that there was no room in it even for his father or his sufferings. The father was, therefore, compelled to stop his education. What do you think of this boy ?

A STUDENT. His attitude was highly shameful.

TEACHER. While selfishness hardens the hearts of millions of sons and makes them a curse to their families, the development of the spirit of considerateness leads to happier and more blissful results. Let me give you one or two instances in this connection.

One day I was conducting a moral instruction lesson when a gentleman came and requested me to see him. When I went out, he held my hand in both of his hands and with tears in his eyes said: "Sir, I have come to thank you for the change that has been wrought in the life of my son. My son has a step-mother. It was, therefore, always a problem with me how to keep him happy and reconciled. What I was not able to solve myself has been so very effectively solved in his life here in your institution. I find him now very solicitous about his step mother's interest and about me. He volunteers to do a lot of small things for us both which has filled the life of both of us with real joy. Our home, which was hell before, has become a heaven now. He never goes to bed before he has shampooed my feet and thus soothed me to sleep. Similarly, he helps his mother in various domestic matters. Will you kindly tell me how this change was brought about in my son, so that I may help him at home ?" You can see here that a little considerateness

for his parents made the boy a darling of the family.

There was another case and still more striking. One day I was standing at a railway station when a gentleman came and offered obeisance to me. I enquired as to whom I had the pleasure to address. He had, "Sir, you do not know me. But I have a reason to know you and thank you. My son named.....is studying in your college. Before he joined your college he was difficult to please. Being a man of limited means I could not meet his demands. If I ever expressed my inability to meet his demands, he would make a wry face and go away displeased. But now his entire attitude has changed. He has stopped taking even pocket money from me. Only lately I told him that as winter was approaching and the whole family was to have new suits, he should also have his new suit. But he declined my offer saying that he had enough suits already and that he would not burden me with any unnecessary expenditure. His mother, with tears in her eyes, appealed to him not to deny himself even such ordinary things. But he told her in reply, 'Mother. I am yearning for the day when I should pay you a hundred-fold at least in money for the monetary services that you have done to me. It is impossible to make an adequate return for your love.'

The gentleman felt choked when he uttered the last line. I was happy that this was a case of a genuine feeling of regard for parents. I am glad to tell you that the boy lived up to his word. He is a double M.A. and a professor and has the reputation of being an ideal son. This is the kind of considerateness that a son should have for his father. Every son should feel that whatever services he gets from his father are a debt on him which he has to repay with love and gratitude. In the light of the example of this boy, can you tell me how many among you possess the true spirit of considerateness for your parents ?

A STUDENT. Sir, we are thankful to you for having made the position clear to us. We feel that we have to traverse a long way before we can be really good children. But we shall try.

TEACHER. I want to tell you again that if you begin to

imbibe that spirit in relation to your parents, you would be proud to own your poor parents. And you would be proud to do the honest but the so-called 'menial work' which the parents may be following as a profession. Let me give you two instances : one of a bad son and the other of a grateful one.

In a certain boarding house there used to live a student. His father was a rich man but he was a simple villager. When, dressed like a villager, he came to see him, the son was so much shocked to see his father in his college and got angry with him for having done so, saying. "What will boys think of me when they come to know that a shabbily dressed man like you is my father ?" The whole day long he kept him confined to his room and when he went out he locked the room from outside keeping his father caged in. At night, he silently took him out and saw him off at the station. This is the case of an ungrateful child who had no feeling for his father. But there was another student of the same college who was the son of a petty *zamindar*. He was so much changed for the better that, when he went home, he asked his father to take rest. He attended to every duty of his father from the ploughing in the field to the milking of the buffaloes at home. When he returned after three months' vacation, he said, "In the beginning I felt as if the whole world was staring at me saying. 'Just look at the fool who is a college student and who is doing all this menial work !' But love and consideration for my father which had developed in me not only made me feel proud of my father but also proud of his profession. Hence, not only did I do all the work for my father but found in it that wonderful joy which was a new experience to me." From the example of this young man, you can see how real considerateness for his father made the son not only feel proud of him, in spite of his inferior social standing, but even feel happy in serving him.

## CONSIDERATENESS FOR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

The class met again. Some of the students appeared thoughtful and preoccupied. It appeared that the last talk had given them food for thought. One of them, however, broke the ice and said : "Sir, give us a talk on our relation to our brothers and sisters in the light of the new approach to morality such as you made in the last lecture."

TEACHER. Dear boys, the absence of the spirit of considerateness for brothers and sisters has played havoc even in this relation. I shall give you instances of how selfishness poisons our best blood ties.

In my own town there used to live two brothers who were the sons of a rich man. In the early nineties, one of them was even a municipal commissioner. These brothers had a very large property to divide. The division would have been easy if they had some consideration for each other. But since that was absent, the division became a herculean task with them. So they rushed to court for decision. For more than twenty years the litigation dragged on between them, causing them, not only heavy losses but a lot of bitterness. The litigation came to an end only when after 22 or 23 years one of the brothers died. The net result of their quarrel was that one brother lost everything he had, while the other had only a residential house left. Thus brothers who are presumed to be each other's tower of strength proved the source of destruction of their respective families. If any one of them had a spirit of sacrifice, such a tragedy would never have been enacted in our town.

There is another incident which took place in another town. There were two brothers. They divided a large property. One of them died young and left an only son. The

other was blessed with several sons. Now this surviving brother who had six sons fell into a very dangerous mood. He began to think within himself : "How sad it is that when I die my property would be parcelled out among so many of my children. Every one of them will be a petty *zamindar* while my brother's only son will have a share equal to that of all my six children put together. I cannot bear this !" Obsessed with this blood-thirsty mood, he hatched a terrible plot. He asked one or two of his sons to murder that boy. It was said that he counselled them that it did not matter if one of them was hanged, but the property would come to the survivors and they would not suffer the humiliation of being petty *zamindars*. With this infernal intention, he put the plot into execution and the poor young boy, the only son of his dead brother, was done to death, plunging his widowed mother into everlasting agony. This is an example of how selfishness or exaggerated self-love makes a man the murderer of his brothers and nephews.

Years ago, a worker of the Dev Samaj and I visited a rich man's house. Two boys were lying in a bed clasped in each other's arms. Pointing to them the worker said : "You see what a love these two young boys manifest for each other. But I know the world and the mentality of these boys, too. Alas ! The time will come when their self-interest will be all that would matter with them and brotherly love would vanish !" About thirty years after, these two brothers were found drifting away from each other so far apart that they would not like to see each other's face. Those who began their childhood with almost ideal love, ended their life—for one of them is dead—in extreme bitterness, so much so that the surviving brother was not present even at the death-bed of his once-beloved brother.

A STUDENT. Do you think, Sir, our lot too, will be the same ? At present we feel that life is unbearable without our brothers and sisters.

TEACHER. Dear children, you have to realize that our life—physical, mental, moral and spiritual—is governed by immutable laws. These laws when they once come into operation, bring their inevitable results. Hence those, who develop

a love for their self at the cost of consideration for others, cannot but become not only blind but callous. They feel no compunction in sacrificing the dearest ties at the altar of self-love.

A STUDENT. Does self-love develop all at once ?

TEACHER. Every habit grows in us by our thoughts and actions. Every time we sacrifice others at the altar of our self-interest, we feed our feeling of self-love. If this is repeated, the feeling develops into a habit. In the form of habit every low desire becomes a low-love or low-hate. These low-loves and low-hates poison all our sweet relations.

A STUDENT. Will you kindly illustrate this ?

TEACHER. By all means. There were two brothers. One of them always found pleasure in doing service to his father but the other made light of his wishes. This state of things was observed by the father. He was a wise man. He knew that his sons were being formed into altogether different moulds of life. He realized that whilst the former would grow to be his friend and be a dutiful son, the other would grow into a parasite and an unfilial child. He tried his best to keep both his sons in good society. It was surprising that while the former went on developing into a noble son, the other went on drifting to the opposite direction. I know when once the father fell ill, his good son really mothered him and sunned the evening of his life, while the other son clouded and embittered his last days. The good son, who had learnt to forget himself for his father, very naturally, forgot his self in the interest of the progress and welfare of his family even after his father's death. He served his father's children as if they were his own. All this became possible because he had developed the spirit of service.

A STUDENT. How would we know, Sir, that we are sacrificing the interest of our brothers and sisters at the altar of our self-love ?

TEACHER. I would give instances to illustrate this point.

A man died in poverty. He left a tolerably big family. One of his sons began to show a strange behaviour after his father's death. He would not take his meals till his younger brothers and sisters had taken theirs. The grandmother

marked this. The brother was not more than 13 or 14 years of age; but the grandmother invariably found that this grandson of hers took his meals last of all. One day she purchased cloth for his coat as he was in a high school, while the younger brothers and sisters were as yet in the primary department. She ordered him to get a coat made for himself. This boy took the cloth to a tailor but got two coats made for his two younger brothers, and himself went without one. When the grandmother came to know of it she hugged the selfless boy to her heart and in the ecstasy of joy, said : "So long as you live, our family will not come to grief." Her love, therefore, for that grandson grew apace. And the subsequent life of that boy proved a blessing for the family, for he took the family out of the gutter to a position of power and plenty

There is another story of a boy whom I witnessed showing this wonderful spirit. This boy used to get pocket money when he went to school. He was then hardly six or seven years of age. One day while he was about to purchase something for himself at a shop, he found a shabbily dressed boy looking wistfully at the shopkeeper's things. The boy silently handed his pocket-money to the shopkeeper, saying : "Let this poor boy have whatever he wants out of the money I have given to you." It was this spirit that grew so strong in him that if, on a festive occasion, he got some silver coin to spend, he would take his younger brothers in his arms, purchase for them the toys and sweets they wanted and himself would go without anything. At the age of fifteen, this boy's self-sacrifice for the family became so marked a feature in his life that the whole family developed a faith in him. He really became for the family a tower of strength and also a great blessing.

A STUDENT. Sir, can we develop this beautiful feeling even at this stage of life when we are at college ?

TEACHER. It is never too late to start life over again. Every good habit is an achievement. It has to be won. In the initial stages, our siding with good habits may prove difficult, but if we go on persisting and repeating the same good thing in our thoughts and deeds, the time is bound to come when

doing good to another or self sacrifice would become a matter of course.

A STUDENT. Sir, will you cite some examples to carry home to us the truth of the above statement ?

TEACHERS. Yes, by all means. I cite here the following instances :

There were two brothers who were given to various kinds of vices and who would have proved enemies to each other, when they fortunately came in contact with our society. They not only gave up their gross sins but also began to develop a feeling of considerateness for each other. A time came in their lives when they had to divide their property. The property was divided by the elder brother by means of a simple post-card which he wrote to his brother. The younger brother was deeply touched by the consideration shown to him. There was a house which could not be divided. The elder brother requested the younger brother to have the whole, while the younger brother humbly appealed to his elder brother to keep it with himself. This is how by the development of the feeling of considerateness for a brother, made even the division of property, which is the bone of contention for millions of homes, so easy of solution.

Let me give you another story. It was the eldest brother who narrated this to me. They are three brothers and all the three are simply bursting with that wonderful feeling of considerateness for one another. Once it so happened that rupees two thousand could not be accounted for by one brother. He did not know to whom the sum belonged. He insisted upon his elder brother to have the amount, but the latter would not touch it. He said : "Since the amount is unexplained, it belongs to you. I am not prepared to accept it."

The above two instances will show you that when the feeling of considerateness for others develops, it sounds the death-knell of self-love. It is self-love that makes sacrifice impossible or at least extremely difficult. But considerateness for others solves these difficulties in a minute.

A STUDENT. Sir, what is the loss to the family if all the brothers and sisters become selfish ? At the most, they will



not feel for each other. How would that affect the family ?

TEACHER. A boy who has got a feeling of considerateness for his family becomes a wonderful integrating force, while one who is selfish proves a terrible disintegrating force. Let me illustrate this by examples.

There was a lady who lost her husband when her eldest child was hardly 12 years of age. She had six children. To her good fortune, her second son entered Government service at the age of 16 or 17 when he passed Matriculation. His younger brother who was three or four years junior to him looked very promising. This dear boy used to tell his mother: "Dear mother, this third brother of ours is most promising. Bless me that I may be able to send him up for college education." In those days, college education was very rare. This second son worked day and night in his office and, within a few years, he won the golden opinion of his officers and got a big lift. By the time his younger brother passed Matric, he was in a position to send him to college. He cheerfully spent money on him till he became a B.A., LL.B. Soon after that this younger brother became an E.A.C. He then devoted his energies to his fourth brother and gave him a good college education in the medical line. This boy became a renowned doctor. After he had served his two younger brothers, he requested his elder brother also to go and qualify himself in Homoeopathy at Calcutta. He got his youngest sister married in a good family. Thus one good son was the making of the whole family, while I know of several families who have been ruined because the eldest brother thought of himself and sacrificed the interests of his brothers and sisters. The spirit of considerateness is a spirit of cohesion. As life-power in our body keeps the body alive, in the same way the spirit of considerateness for others keeps a family or any other corporate body cemented and strong.

A STUDENT. Don't you think, Sir, that this spirit of sacrifice may no doubt save others but may prove to be the end of the man who makes such a sacrifice ?

TEACHER. It is really a good question that you have asked. Now you must try to see the distinction between a

spendthrift disposition and a serviceable disposition. The spendthrift would prove inimical to his career, but the self-sacrificing man knows how to earn and knows how to give. He who develops the power of maintaining the whole family does possess the power to maintain himself. On the contrary, his capacity for helping himself develops in proportion to his ability to successfully stand the burdens of others. I have always found that such a son of a family is never second. There is no doubt that he makes a sacrifice of some money which will otherwise be his, but that never interferes with his capacity to earn and support himself. What he gives in money he gets back hundred-fold in gratitude and service. After all, what is the value of the man who possesses all the goods of the world but is lacking in higher life? A man without higher life is a walking sepulchre. Ethically, he is not living; he is dead. A self-sacrificing man alone wins the trophy of higher life.

## NEED OF RESPECT AND REVERENCE

When the class met for the period the moral instruction teacher said : "Young men, I want to give you a talk to-day on some of the necessary virtues which we ought to possess if we want to develop the right relatedness in various relations. One of these virtues is true respect or reverence. It is this virtue which helps us to respect the age, experience, position and inner beauties of others. As our physical eyes are absolutely necessary to enable us to see the qualities of the external form, so true respect or reverence is necessary to show us the superiority and beauties of the inner life of others"

A STUDENT. Will you kindly make this point clear by examples?

TEACHER. It is related in the history of the Sikhs that their fifth guru, Shri Arjun Devji, was a devoted disciple of his own father, the fourth guru, Shri Ramdasji. He had an elder brother. While the elder brother paid conventional respect to his father, the younger brother by virtue of his feelings of reverence saw the superiority and beauty of the inner life of his father. He was humble enough to appreciate it and grew fond of his father as a guru. Though both the young men were the sons of the same father, yet because one possessed reverence and the other did not, their attitude towards their own father was quite different. The son ennobled by reverence has left an immortal name in the history of the Sikhs. In the same way, we find that Ananda grew to be the most devoted disciple of Buddha because his reverence showed him the beauty in the life of Mahatma Buddha whom he accepted as his guru, even though Buddha was his cousin by blood. There were several other relatives of Buddha who lived in his time but since they could not see any beauty in his life, they could not benefit by his noble life. On the contrary

the attitude of some of them was even hostile.

It is this reverence which not only enables a son or a relative or any other to see the beauties of the inner life of his own father or a relative, etc., and feel proud of him, but also helps him to assimilate these beauties in his own life.

A STUDENT. How does it help one to assimilate the beauties of the inner life of another through reverence?

TEACHER. When a man possesses reverence, he not only sees the beauties of the inner life of a person but by contrast would also feel himself poorer in soul so far as these beauties are concerned. He thus becomes humble. In this attitude of humility he goes into a condition fit to receive into his own life the blessings of those beauties. His reverence makes him sing about the beauties in the life of his revered object and gradually imbibe them into his own life.

A STUDENT. Will you kindly give us some examples to illustrate this?

TEACHER. Yes. In the history of English literature there is the story of Dr. Johnson and his great disciple and biographer, James Boswell. Boswell was a barrister. He was so much impressed by the literary genius of Dr. Johnson who was in his own time a towering literary personality, that for all his life his heart was captured. He would seek opportunities to be near Dr. Johnson and has preserved any amount of instances and utterances of the Doctor. He could blissfully see those beauties in Johnson which others could not see. Boswell, so to say, hung upon the lips of Dr. Johnson. When Dr. Johnson died, Boswell wrote his biography. Boswell was not known to be a great writer, but his deep reverence for Johnson gave him so much insight into his master's life that he was able to write a masterly biography which holds in the world of Biography as high a position as Shakespeare holds in the world of Drama. He has become, by means of this virtue, an immortal writer. It is said that Dr. Johnson is not immortalized by his own works so much as he is by Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

A STUDENT. Will you kindly show us how this virtue can help us to better our relations with our parents and others?

TEACHER. Let me take the case of parents. It is said of

a king that once when somebody asked him why he kept a beard, he is reported to have said: "I keep it because the best man in the world kept it." By that, it is said, he meant his own father. This is what reverence produced in the life of a king. As contrasted with this, let me give you what irreverence produced in the life of a young college student. One day a college student came to me and said: "Sir, I am to be married, so kindly grant me leave." I said, "My young boy, you have not even passed B.A. Why do you marry so early?" He startled me by saying: "The old man in our family who is too oldfashioned and has lost his senses, is compelling me to marry." I said: "My boy, is this the language that you ought to use in relation to your father?" The boy said: "He doesn't deserve better language for the injustice that he is doing me." Well, the only thing the young man could rightly do was to respectfully decline to be a party to such a thing, but he had no business to give vent to the venom of his spleen. So you understand what a havoc the absence of respect or reverence for a father works in the soul of a son.

A STUDENT. It is highly shameful for a son to have used such language in relation to his own father. But how should we know that we are lacking in this virtue?

TEACHER. A boy who has no feeling of respect or reverence will find pleasure in talking ill of his father when his low-loves and low-hates are not satisfied. A man who possesses true respect or reverence would find it very painful even to hear another speak ill of his father. I shall give you an example of how reverence makes one feel pain when the object of reverence is being talked ill of. When I was schooling, a teacher who was given to beating his students became the topic of our conversation. Some of the boys talked ill of him. A young student, who subsequently became an idol of his people, felt the sting and expressed his indignation by saying: "Aren't you all ashamed of talking ill of a benefactor at whose feet you are receiving your daily lessons?" I was deeply impressed by that boy's reverence. Thus those who possess reverence for any person will find joy in singing the praise of his virtues and feel pained when he is talked ill of.

A STUDENT. Is it a sin, Sir, to talk ill of another?

TEACHER. It is always sinful to speak ill of another if one does so in order to find satisfaction in it. It is said that some of the ministers of Alexander the Great, complained to him that his mother was seriously interfering with the affairs of the State. Alexander the Great had very deep reverence for his mother. In a restrained voice he said to his ministers: "Do you know that one tear of my mother will wash away all your complaints?" This is how a world-conqueror felt pained, when somebody talked ill of his mother. It is said of Napoleon the Great that after he had become the Emperor of France and the terror of the world, he was one day walking in a garden. Since he was the Emperor, everybody who came into his presence kissed his hand. At that time his mother happened to pass by. In his light mood the Emperor extended his hand for her to kiss. At this his mother in the most dignified words said to him: "My son, take back your hand. This is the hand (*extending her own hand to him*) which you have to kiss, because it is this hand which has built your life and fortune." The Emperor, who worshipped his mother, very humbly took her hand and kissed it. He not only venerated his mother but felt proud of her. As opposed to this, I give you the example of a mere clerk whose infatuation for his wife was great and his respect for his mother was almost non-existent. When once he came from a distant station, where he was employed, and met his wife, she poured poison into his ears and the first thing that he did the next morning was to call his mother to account. He asked her why it was that she was troubling his wife. The mother said: "My boy, has it become so easy for you to be beguiled by your wife? Don't forget that when your father left you a child of four or five years, I had to do menial work to bring you up and educate you. Again, when you grew up, I had to put in the hardest endeavours to get you married to the girl you now worship. I am an elderly woman now, I know how young girls suffer because of inexperience. I had, therefore, to keep a firm hold on her. Instead of thanking me for all this and taking me for her well-wisher, you allow yourself to be poisoned by her against me. I wonder how, without hearing my

side, you have condemned me *ex-parte*." Though the mother was persuasive, this man lost control over himself and, taking up a blunt instrument, gave her such a hard blow on her head that she began to bleed profusely. I was present when this poor woman came running to her benefactor, with tears in her eyes to tell him how her son had treated her. Absence of all respect for his mother made the son a brute. You can, therefore, see how necessary it is for all of us to develop true respect or reverence for our parents and elders, for if we lack it we shall lack in humanity.

A STUDENT. How is it that true respect or reverence for our parents and elders keeps us decent in their relation ?

TEACHER. A person, who has reverence for another considers the object of his reverence very sacred—so sacred that he would not allow any of his lower feelings to soil that relation. Reverence proves a good check upon vanity, which by itself makes us not only lose respect for others but also makes us think too highly of our own "self", so highly that everybody else is considered inferior. It is vanity which desecrates even the most sacred ties. Vanity makes us mad. It makes us lose count of others. It is reverence which can keep vanity in check in relation to the object of reverence. This can be illustrated by many examples. There was a woman who was considered an absolute shrew in her neighbourhood, but she was fortunate in possessing deep reverence for her husband. Reverence for parents, husband, wife, etc., is generally absent, for familiarity, unfortunately, breeds contempt. But this lady had true respect for her husband. When nobody was able to control her, one word from her husband would quail her into a corner. Once her husband fell ill and it was a sight to see how this woman forgot herself in his service. The husband was feeling very uneasy, so he wished her to sing to take his mind off his trouble. As several other gentlemen who had come to see him were present, she felt hesitant. The husband said : "I will become all right if you sing." It was suprising how she overcame all her hesitation and sang, as she had never sung before. Then she said to him: "Tell me what more do you want ? I will do everything in my power to help you to become well." Those present really

marvelled at this woman's humility towards her husband, when otherwise she was so arrogant in relation to others.

There was a young boy like you who came of a very high family. He was fond of education. A man belonging to a caste lower than his had become a graduate. This boy's reverence for that graduate grew very deep. He used to go to learn from him. In return for what that graduate taught him, this boy used to broom his room, fetch water for him, pull *pankha* for him, make purchases for him and found no difficulty whatsoever in doing all kinds of service for him. People remonstrated with him saying that for a boy belonging to such a high caste, it was not desirable to do that menial work for a man of a lower caste. This boy's constant reply was : "I feel him to be so great that it is simply a pleasure for me to do any service for him. I feel grateful to him because he gives me the opportunity." This is how reverence subdues vanity. If we can realize that vanity has been the cause of the ruin of many a home, we shall value reverence at least for the fact that it antidotes the poison of vanity.

A STUDENT. Will you give us an example of the dangers of vanity ?

TEACHER. They are writ large on every wall of every house. There was a student who gave up his education in the middle of his career. A young graduate, who valued education very highly, inspired that young man to recommence his education. The young man did so. And this young graduate undertook to coach him up. He got him to pass the Matriculation examination. Then he took him to the college, where he was studying for LL.B. One day this young man, who was in the First Year class of the college was found fault with by this graduate for the wrong done by him. The young man, who had an over-abundance of vanity but not even a bit of reverence, became so blind and mad that he told his benefactor and teacher : "Do you know that I do not care a fig for you ? What if you are a graduate ? You have mugged up a few books and got through the examination. Any Tom, Dick and Harry can do so. Why are you putting on airs ?" This vain young man never became a graduate. This is the havoc which vanity worked in the



soul of a young boy. Again, there was a boy who became an M.A. After this, his vanity became so morbid that he could not consider anybody superior to him. He had the making of a good writer, but he lost that chance. One day it so happened that he showed his first article to a journalist. The journalist criticized the article and he was so offended by the criticism that he never saw his face again. In fact that young M.A. never found the gate to progress open and he lived to an old age a most unproductive man. He never wrote anything worth preserving. Don't you, therefore, realize that a feeling which can overcome this vanity is a most precious feeling and it is worth while developing it ?

## GRATITUDE IN ANIMALS

TEACHER. My young friends, I tried to impress upon you in my last lecture the supreme need of the virtue of true respect or reverence. When we realize that by means of this virtue alone can we see the beauties of character in our parents, elders and others, there cannot be two opinions about the necessity of developing it. Several lives have been glorified because they possessed this virtue. In the religious world, Saul become St. Paul because of his deep reverence for Christ, whose virtues he imbibed. In Islam, Khalifa Ali, a cousin of the Founder of Islam, became immortalized in Muslim history because he possessed reverence for the Founder. Several other relatives of the Founder have no name in history because in the absence of reverence they could see nothing beautiful in him. In Sikh history, Bhai Bala and Mardana got a niche in the temple of fame among the Sikhs because of their reverence for their *guru*. The present leader of the Qadiani sect is a son of the Founder. His very deep reverence for his father has made him live for him and sacrifice his energies for him and to sing his glory. This virtue and a life of sacrifice have made him the leader of his community. The first successor of the Founder of the Salvation Army was his own son and the present head of the Salvation Army is the Founder's own daughter. Both these have worn the crown of fame because of the deep reverence that they had for their father whose greatness they imbibed and whose cause they made their own and for whom they made the greatest sacrifices. From all these instances we can see that even persons who were not extraordinary became extraordinary in the world because by means of reverence, they not only imbibed the life of the objects of reverence but also made their cause their own because it appeared to them very beautiful. After all, one is not going to sacrifice one self

for what does not appear to him beautiful. If a man has to sacrifice his energies for something higher, he must see the beauty of that something higher. Reverence is one of the principal keys for the unlocking of that door by which one can attain the qualities of the object of one's reverence.

A STUDENT. Sir, is not reverence responsible for the havoc which the *sadhus* are playing in the lives of millions of homes among Hindus?

TEACHER. Yes, that is blind reverence which is really very harmful. True reverence is always for the beauties of a higher character. It is blind reverence which makes one admire on the basis of convention or superstition. Blind reverence is really dreadful. It is this blind reverence that is costing India crores of rupees every month. Because there are false coins, it does not follow that there are no true ones. I know some individuals and groups of men who have, in their indignation against orthodoxy and superstition, committed huge blunders and tried to destroy the very feeling of reverence in their followers. And what is the result? The followers have no doubt developed a strong hatred against certain forms of superstitions, but they have also lost the precious sense of true respect or reverence for the sacred or sublime. To these people nothing is sacred. Now since low hatred is not food but a poison for the soul, this has damaged their moral sense so terribly that they are directing the same cudgels against one another's person, which they had raised against superstition. Destruction of reverence has made them vulgar, insolent, offensive and, in some cases, worse than animals. These irreverent or vain persons have lost the power of seeing the beauties of life and, therefore, they have lost the very chance of imbibing those beauties in their own lives. Hence it is a most insane attitude in the world to destroy true reverence, just because there happens to be blind reverence.

A STUDENT. Sir, we have seen the necessity of this beautiful virtue. Is there any other virtue also which we should develop?

TEACHER. The next virtue which I want to deal with is gratitude a virtue which is conspicuous by its absence in

mankind. You know that there is a saying in the English language: "As indifferent as a son." Now it is the son who receives the greatest service from his parents. If a son who after receiving this huge service from his parents, pays them with indifference, how can he return any other man anything better than indifference for the services that he receives from him? In this respect animals have shown better records than man.

A STUDENT. How, Sir?

TEACHER. History is full of incidents of such horses who have, at the risk of their own lives, tried to save their masters. In certain cases, the horse did not move from the place where his master fell. They have died there of starvation but never given up guarding their masters' corpses. There are breeds of horses which are uniformly grateful. So far as dogs are concerned, their gratitude is an accepted fact. It is not that one or two dogs have been grateful; there are breeds after breeds of dogs which have shown wonderful virtues of loyalty and gratitude. In my childhood, I read several stories of the gratitude of dogs. I remember the story of a dog who had accompanied his master's son to some snow-covered mountain where the child slipped and fell into the hollow of the mountain. The master did not know where his son had gone. The dog returned, took a piece of loaf placed before him and disappeared. This happened the next day also. A neighbour drew the attention of the master to the strange conduct of his dog. They, therefore, determined to follow the dog to know where he took the bread. They found the dog going up the mountain and followed him. At last they found him standing at some place and jumping down. They went, and to their surprise, found the child there and the loaves before him. Thus the boy was recovered. The number of such instances is a legion.

A STUDENT. Sir, dogs are indeed very grateful beings.

TEACHER. I give you another story of a dog which is still more striking.

In a certain European country dog tax was introduced. A poor man had a dog but he was not able to pay the tax. He could not bear to leave his dog in the streets at the

mercy of the hard world. He, therefore, thought it an act of mercy to end the life of his dog. With this object he tied a heavy stone round the neck of the dog and took him to the middle of a stream and left him there. By accident, the rope with which the stone was tied gave way and the dog got free. But, as ill luck would have it, the master began to drown. The dog, forgetting everything, ran to his master, seized him by the hair, lifted him up and dragged him to the bank. Thus he saved the life of his master. The master was so deeply touched that he hugged the dog to his heart and said : "O, dear ! I wanted to kill you, but you have saved me, From this day I will starve and pay the tax but never abandon you."

A STUDENT. This instance is most inspiring, Sir.

TEACHER. I will give you one more instance and then stop. In my province, there is a tomb of a dog on the top of a mountain. His biography is given in one of our vernacular texts. A man had gone to a distant place with his dog. He ran short of money and approached an acquaintance of his, who knew this man's utter devotion for the dog, with a request that he should lend him money to reach his native place and as a security he was leaving his dog as a pawn. The man lent him the money and the master instructed his dog to stay there. The dog understood his master's mood and stayed behind. After some days his new master's house was broken into by thieves. The dog very heroically saved his new master's money and property by fighting the thieves. The new master was so pleased with the dog that he set him free and told him by gestures that he could go to his old master's house. The dog understood him and joyfully left. In the meantime the old master had left his place to redeem him. When he reached the place where the tomb lies, it is said, his master met him. Thinking that the dog had dishonoured his pledge by running away, he grew furious with him and poured invectives on him. It is said that the dog died of a broken heart. It is possible the master may have killed him but the story goes that he could not bear the attitude of his master. When the master reached the

place of his creditor and offered money and apology that the dog should have left, the creditor said : "My man, you have nothing to pay me. Your dog earned his freedom. He saved my house, property and our lives." Hearing this the master broke into sobs. He went back and built a stone grave over the dog's dead body. It stands there up to this day.

A STUDENT. Sir, these animals deserve our best love.

TEACHER. You would be surprised to know that in European countries these animals have won the hearts of men to such an extent that if there is an appeal for distressed animals, money in thousands is subscribed but not so when there is an appeal for distressed men.

A STUDENT. This is surprising, Sir, but is it true?

TEACHER. Yes. It is true. I have brought for you to-day a magazine, *Tit Bits*, for March 26, 1938. The editor writes :

"Less than a year ago the Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, broadcast an appeal on the national wave length for that splendid Medical Amalgamation, the Birmingham Hospital Centre. The public response totalled £421. Two months later, Sir Robert Gower appealed for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, for whose splendid ministrations there can be nothing but praise. The money was required for the clinics for sick animals. The broadcast was not entirely national, yet the listening public donated the sum of £ 1, 325, 7s. 7d.

"Again, the poor people's dispensary—for sick animals—received from one broadcast appeal the magnificent sum of £ 1,812. But Heaven alone knows why, when Prebendary T. Wellen asked the listening country for money for the children's aid society, his hearers in their millions were moved to give only £ 690. Worse than that is the shameful fact that when Miss Irene Vanburg made an excellent plea on behalf of Clepton and District Hospital, the noble response of that Sunday night's invisible public was almost the invisible sum of £ 41, 2s. 7d."

So, boys, you can see that men contribute more for the suffering animals than for the suffering men.

A STUDENT. Sir, is that conduct desirable ?

TEACHER. No. Men ought to feel better for their fellow human beings. But the question that you have to ask is : Why is it so ?

STUDENT. (In chorus) Yes, Sir, tell us why it is so.

TEACHER. This is so because man receives ample service and gratitude from several species of animals for the little that he does for them. But in the case of human beings he receives, as a rule, no end of ingratitude.

A STUDENT. Is that so, Sir ?

TEACHER. I shall tell you a very illuminating incident. Mahatma Vidyasagar was once informed that a particular man was calling him names. He fell into deep reflection. After a few minutes he opened his eyes and said to his informant : "So far as I remember, I have done him no good. Why does he abuse me ?"

It was the bitterest experience of Mahatama Vidyasagar that usually they maligned him whom he had served. In Dev Samaj also we have got a very bitter experience. Those persons who, according to their own admission, received countless favours from the the Founder of the Dev Samaj and in some cases rose from the position of a vagabond to a high station in life because of the higher changes wrought in them by the Founder of the Dev Samaj, showed the greatest enthusiasm in persecuting him. This kind of attitude is not found among horses, cows, sheep, goats, etc. I also remember once a great man telling his audience : 'If you serve a cow, it will be ready to give you milk. If you feed a dog, it will stand a sentinel at your door against thieves. But if you feed a man, his immediate intention will be to stare at the women of the family or to do some such undesirable action.' This is how he tried to distinguish between man and useful domestic animals. It is a general cry how servants not only steal their master's money, but even steal the master's honour. There are any number of cases when the servants have run away with the property or women of their masters' families. It is this bitter experience about the conduct of man towards those who serve him that has given rise to the feeling that gratitude is absent in humanity. We should, therefore, not

be surprised to read the following bit of news in the *Tit Bits* :

“In Addington, in Lancashire, unemployment is still a bitter reality. There are many needy children, there are men and women, too. Yet when Mrs M.M.C. Whalley, who owned most of Addington, died, she left the bulk of her property to the dogs in London.”

The editor of that journal remarked on this: “Charity or stupid sentimentality ?” We ask: “Is it really stupid sentimentality?” May it not be that Mrs. Whalley’s experience of man was bitter ? We agree that it is a great blunder to ignore distressed men for distressed animals.

I shall talk on this virtue in the next meeting.



## NEED OF GRATITUDE TOWARD PARENTS AND BENEFACTORS

TEACHER. In my last talk I told you that the treatment which man has received from fellow men and from animals has convinced him that gratitude is not found in mankind to the extent that it is found in animals. As a practical demonstration of this I quoted to you certain paragraphs from the *Tit Bits* showing how an appeal for animals brought more funds from the public than an appeal for the relief of distressed men. We cannot quarrel with facts. We have to accept them. But it is sad that the attention of man is not directed towards the cultivation of this great virtue. What is even more serious is that he does not seem to realize its need in his life.

A STUDENT. Will you kindly explain why we should develop gratitude?

TEACHER. Gratitude in fact should be the first natural reaction in our life. The one thing that is most prominent in every human life is the contributions that it receives from innumerable benefactors. In fact man's being is a gift of his parents. From conception to birth, every human child receives nutrition from the blood which its mother contributes for the building up of its entire body. The first persons to greet it when it is born are its parents and for years together it receives a constant stream of favours from them. Now, the least that a man should do is to remember these favours and feel indebted for them to his parents. If a man were to feel indebted for all these favours, his heart would become softened and instead of making more demands on his parents, he would feel grateful to them for the immense favours that he has received from them in the past. This attitude would produce an urge in his mind to reciprocate

the services that he has received by himself doing something for them in return. Thus the bond of mutual service would be the first and immediate result. Will not such a feeling of mutual service produce a better atmosphere in the home?

A STUDENT. Yes, Sir, it would. But is it not the duty of parents to look after us?

TEACHER. Indeed it is the duty of our parents to look after us. But does our duty consist in forgetting their favours and growing ungrateful to them? Which do you consider is a better attitude of mind—gratitude or ingratitude? Let me give you two instances and you decide for yourselves which appeals to you more. In Christian history there is recorded the true story of two young men who were brought up by a great man in his own house. He not only fed and maintained them but defrayed all the expenses on their education and even helped them to settle in life. This great man had a daughter. This girl fell in love with one of these young men who was decidedly a better boy and they were married. After some time, both the husband and the wife became Christians. At a later stage the father of the girl also became a Christian. The disappointed young man paid his benefactor, his daughter, and his son-in-law (the latter being his classmate also) by betraying them into the hands of the enemies in order to get a big reward. The result was that the young girl was arrested at a time when she was in an advanced stage of pregnancy. Her husband was also captured and ordered to be tortured to death. As soon as she came to hear about her husband's death by torture she had a severe shock which brought about an abortion of which she died the same day. This is how all these persons suffered at the hands of the man to whom they had done nothing but good.

There is a story of a Pathan who was once a peon in a Baluchistan court but who had subsequently joined a gang of dacoits. When he was a peon, his immediate officer, who was a Hindu, was very kind to him. Once this Hindu who had risen to a high job was returning to Headquarters and was travelling in tongas with his wife and children. On the way the shades of the night fell. The tongas were stop-

ped by a gang of dacoits who immediately dispossessed the ladies of all their ornaments and cash. At that time the leader of the gang came and asked his people if they had finished the work. This Hindu officer recognized the voice of the leader and addressing him by name, said: "Are you not so and so who was at one time my peon? My name is..." The Pathan at once recognized his master and said: "Babu Sahib, are you really here and have we robbed you?" The Babu said: "Yes, your people have robbed me of everything." Thereupon the Pathan said: "I am extremely sorry, Babu Sahib, you are my benefactor. I have eaten your salt. I am just going to return everything to you and apologize to you for the unfortunate experience you had to pass through at our hands." So saying he ordered his men to return everything. When this was done, the Pathan approached the Babu and said: "Babuji, you must now break your journey and give me a chance to pay back the debt of gratitude that I owe you." As Babuji had to reach his destination the next day, he expressed his inability to accept the invitation. Thereupon the Pathan ordered his trusted lieutenants to accompany the tongas of his benefactor and to escort the whole family safely to their destination.

Now, boys, tell me whose conduct appeals to you? The conduct of the first man or the second?

A STUDENT. Sir, the first man was simply a viper. The second man, though a dacoit, deserves our appreciation.

TEACHER. If such is your appreciation of a grateful heart in another, that ought to be your view also about having a grateful heart yourself.

A STUDENT. Sir, why is it that we, as a rule, are not so grateful as we ought to be?

TEACHER. This is due to the ever-thickening crust of selfishness in human nature. This is one of the greatest misfortunes of mankind. It leads, in fact, to nearly all the wrongs that men inflict upon one another. This selfishness makes a man want to devour the whole of a person whose blood he has tasted. I shall illustrate the horror of selfishness by a story.

A man bought a cub of a lion. He devoted a lot of love and attention on that cub and it developed in a big but domesticated lion. The lion seemed fond of him. Wherever the master went, the lion followed him. If the master slept in the jungle, the lion would keep watch over him. One day it so happened that the master happened to injure his hand and there was a wound. He was fast asleep and the lion was sitting by him when the lion began to lick his injured hand. The wound opened and blood flowed out of it. The lion tasted his blood. The master woke up because he felt pain. The lion at once jumped over him and killed him and began to drink his blood. Thus a lion who was brought up by the master with the best of intentions became his blood-thirsty murderer. When selfishness overpowered even a beast, it made him an enemy of his own benefactor.

A STUDENT. Can ingratitude be shown towards those who serve us or towards others also ?

TEACHER. Gratitude and ingratitude are always manifested towards those who are our benefactors. Gratitude is a feeling through which one feels indebted to another for the services done to him by the latter. When a man tries to return the good done to him, he is said to be paying a debt of gratitude. So gratitude is a feeling which moves us to pay back the debt to a benefactor who has served us. Ingratitude is generally the suppression of such a debt but it can go a step further in doing wrong or evil to a benefactor. Thus ingratitude is the darkest moral crime because a debtor instead of paying off his debt, injures, maltreats or kills one who has done him great service and thus laid him under obligation. It is, therefore, popularly said that the man who can injure a benefactor can injure anybody.

A STUDENT. Do all of us have benefactors ?

TEACHER. Yes, each and every one of us. Our very being, as I said, is a gift of our parents. We never had any existence before our parents brought us into the world. Again, from the time of conception it is the mother's blood (in the form of nutrition) which goes to build our entire body. When we are born, the first food we take is the mother's or foster-mother's milk. During the entire period

of our childhood it is the constant sacrifice, servitude, watchfulness and attention of the parents, brothers and sisters that help up to grow. From the time that we are placed in school to the time when we complete our education, we receive innumerable items of service from teachers, great writers of our text-books, our fellow students, the government and the public bodies that have built the institutions. Thus we are what we are because thousands and millions of persons have directly or indirectly contributed to our growth.

Now, when we receive all these services, we have to ask as to what is our reaction to them. Are we, like the lion, anxious to have the whole blood of our benefactors because we have tasted some of it through their service or are we feeling deeply indebted and thus grateful to them and also feel an urge to pay back the debt by doing good in return.

A STUDENT. Do not all men react in the same way for the services received ?

TEACHER. No. Most people, because they are selfish, exhibit a wrong reaction. They grow more selfish. There are very few whose reaction is of gratitude. Let me illustrate it by the following two incidents.

When I was an advocate, a wealthy physician came to my house and bared his back for me to see. It bore marks of severe handling. The wealthy physician wept. He said : "My own son has given me these marks. He was not behaving well and I thought it wise to separate him. At the time of separation I gave him Rs. 25,000. He has squandered away the whole amount and is now demanding more. When I refused his demand he made a personal assault on me and beat me. I am an old man and I could not defend myself. Please file a complaint against him." You can see from this real incident what reaction this son had to the huge services that his father had done to him.

I will now give you another story showing a beautiful reaction. There were two students studying in a big high school. One day there was a row in the class for which a most mischievous boy was responsible. When the teacher came back to the class, the mischievous boy silently slunk

away and a perfectly innocent boy was given a thrashing. He protested that he was innocent. The teacher asked : "Who was the boy, then, who committed the mischief ? Do you know him ?" The boy said : "Yes." "Then give me his name !" he asked. The boy remained silent. The teacher again beat him up but the boy refused to give the name. The matter was over. Years rolled on. The mischievous boy became a judge of the Supreme Court. One day, the good boy was brought to him as a political rebel to be tried for sedition. The case was clear. The accused was to receive the capital punishment. But the judge recognized in the political rebel his classmate who had shielded him at a great personal sacrifice. Before passing the judgment, he rode miles to see the Prime Minister to whom he narrated the whole story of his indebtedness to the accused and appealed for a reprieve for his classmate. The next day, he came to the court, read the sentence but told the accused that he had got a reprieve. Thus it was that he paid his benefactor by doing a good turn to him.

From the above two instances, you can see that the son of the physician had received immense favours, but because he was utterly selfish, his reaction was one of greater selfishness. He wanted the whole when he had got a part. But the reaction in the other case was simply sublime. A fellow student had saved this grateful man from the rod of his teacher and he paid him by saving his life.

A STUDENT. Sir, selfishness is most terrible.

TEACHER. Indeed it is. The chief characteristic of selfishness is that it teaches a man to have regard only for himself. This over-regard for himself develops in him a disposition to do injury to others, including benefactors. It makes him cruel, intolerant, unkind and full of bitter hatred. We have, therefore, to realize vividly that as higher people we have to acquire certain other qualities and one of these is gratitude. A writer says :

"The children among the higher races of mankind have, like savages, very little or no feeling of gratitude. A child will receive any number of favours or benefits done through any number of sacrifices without feeling a particle of thank-

fulness for them. For a long time after it learns to say 'thank you', without being prompted by his mother, the child has no feeling of thankfulness corresponding to the word. It is not sincere. Boys and girls, even of considerable years, will accept the most valuable courtesy and forget it in a few weeks or months. Even in adults it is a very common thing for courtesies to be appreciated so feebly as to be forgotten in a few weeks. And nearly all giving is still adulterated a great deal with the trading spirit. It is not pure."

How true are these words of this great writer and how amply they support the contention that gratitude is an attitude which is very weak even among higher people.

A STUDENT. Is ingratitude, Sir, the only evil of selfishness ?

TEACHER. It is one of its evils. It is this over-regard for ourselves or overplus of selfishness which has made the life of peace and co-operation almost impossible in families, in communities, in races and nations, even though the best minds are trying hard to produce the spirit of concord and mutual goodwill. When I talk in some other lesson exclusively on selfishness, I shall show you how this dreadful feeling makes us wish evil and do evil not only to human and sub-human existences in general, but even to our dearest and nearest ones and to our benefactors.

A STUDENT. Is there no way, Sir, to get rid of ingratitude and develop the beautiful feeling of gratitude ?

TEACHER. Yes, there is a way, but as it is getting late, I shall talk of it to-morrow.

## THE NEED OF HIGHER ATMOSPHERE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF GRATITUDE

TEACHER. The way to get rid of ingratitude, to my experience, is to breathe in an atmosphere of higher life. Let me illustrate it by an incident which came my way several years ago. I passed my M.A. in 1907. In those early days education was not so common as it is at present. It was rarely that a student appeared for M.A. That year for the first time four students passed M.A. in my Province and almost every newspaper broadcast this fact. One of these M.A.'s was till lately the Chief Secretary to the Government of my Province. There was every reason for every one of us to feel proud. My result was not out when I left for Lahore to attend the Birthday Anniversary of my most worshipful Master. I got the news of my success when I was living in that holy atmosphere. What surprised me was the consciousness that dawned on me as soon as I was informed of my success by a telegram. The recitation was that my heart went in homage to millions of my benefactors. I saw before me the picture of all those thousands of cultivators who were tilling the soil and providing me and others with food materials. I visualized all those mechanics, artisans, carpenters, labourers and contractors, etc. who contributed to the building of various houses in which I lived. My heart grew humble before those public bodies and those taxpayers who had made the foundation of schools and colleges possible and those teachers, writers and authors who had illumined my mind by their efforts. It occurred to me that but for those millions of contributors I could never have become so highly educated as I was. That was the first thrill of gratitude that I felt on such a large scale. It was not due to my personal efforts ; it was the influence of



that atmosphere which opened a vista of benefactor after benefactor, who were no doubt my benefactors but whom I had never recognized as such before, in the absence of that influence. The higher atmosphere thus made things easy for me and it can make things easy for others, too.

A STUDENT. What is the nature of that atmosphere ?

TEACHER. This atmosphere is charged with light and power. Those who breathe in it get light which not only reveals to them their inner life as it really is, but also shows them the beauty of higher feelings of reverence, gratitude, etc. The power which this atmosphere imparts works wonders in the lives of fit souls.

A STUDENT. Will you kindly give us some illustrations of the working of this atmosphere ?

TEACHER. Yes. Most willingly.

There was a young Brahman whom his father had brought up with love. He gave him good education and then married him to a girl of a respectable family. This Brahman became so infatuated with his wife that he was not able to hear anything against her. It was the Dewali festival day. The father brought sweets for the family. The house was to be illumined with lamps. The boy's wife was in charge of organising the illuminations in every room. The father knew that the girl was careless and he simply said to her : "Child, be very careful. See that you may not bring the light near any inflammable material which is lying all around." There was nothing in the words. But the son confessed to me that he lost his head and told his father, "If you can't trust her, go and do the thing your self." The father was simply stunned and he took his son to task for his rude behaviour. The son grew insolent. The father gave him a slap. He then bit his father so hard that he tore out a lump of flesh from his arm. The father lifted the boy bodily and was about to fling him on the ground and thus dash out his brains when his paternal love came in the way and he simply told him. "My boy, I have it in my power to kill you now but I cannot. You have been an absolute brute in my relation." At midnight when the father was not able to sleep because of physical and mental agony, his wife, the boy's mother, knelt by his bed

and sobbed out her sorrow that she should have given him such a dirty son. The boy saw this but never repented. Years after he had an occasion to live in this holy atmosphere and it was a sight to see how he remembered his past brutal behaviour to his father and broke into sobs. He wrote letters after letters of repentance to his father and took leave to go home and serve him and thus soothe his heart. This is how this atmosphere made him view his ingratitude as evil and gave him an urge to wash clean his heart as also develop gratitude.

Far more pathetic than this is the case of a son who conspired with his brothers to starve their mother to death. One of the three brothers was married. His wife was not living on good terms with her mother-in-law. The three brothers decided to end their mother's life. She fell ill. They refused to send for a doctor. When she was prostrated in bed by disease, all of them silently left the house, locking the door from outside with the intention of keeping away for four or five days and then return to find her dead and thus get rid of her. One of these brothers perchance came to a place where our society had a centre. He happened to listen to the sermon which was being delivered there. The meeting had hardly finished when he, with tears in his eyes, ran back to his village in order to save his mother's life. To his good fortune he was in time. By medical treatment and good nursing his mother recovered and his joy knew no bounds. Thus a man who had decided to starve his mother to a cruel death, was able to realize the ugliness of his wicked act and found no peace of mind till he had not only saved her life but served her for the rest of her life.

A STUDENT. These are very remarkable instances, Sir. Will you kindly give us instances of some highly educated persons who have benefited by this atmosphere ?

TEACHER. You, boys, seem to attach too much importance to education. Educated or uneducated, men are men. They are subject to the same weaknesses. However, I give you instances of educated men as well.

There is a highly educated man, who is a professor in a certain college. When he was still a minor, his father left him,

his sister and his mother to their fate and went away to some distant place. The poor mother had thus the burden of the entire family cast on her shoulders. This son bravely shared the responsibilities of his mother. He was naturally angry with his father for this neglect. Years passed. This young man came to live in the atmosphere I am talking of. After some time, there was a very happy change visible in him. He forgot what he had suffered at the hands of his father, but only remembered that his father was the author of his being. He remembered that for years he had brought him up. He experienced a wave of gratitude. His heart softened towards his father and he determined to make peace with him. He wrote him several letters recounting the favours that he had received at his hands and desiring reconciliation. He, then, went to the place where his father lived and brought him once more to the house and family from which he was a voluntary exile. Thus all the sores of estrangement and bad feelings were healed by the change wrought by this atmosphere in the life of that highly educated young man.

A STUDENT. This indeed is most touching.

TEACHER: Let me give you another instance of an educated merchant. This gentleman had some differences with his father. The gulf widened so much that filial love seemed to have almost vanished. The cause of estrangement was this : The father wanted the son to help his younger brother who was in need. The son refused saying that he had already helped him enough. The father felt deeply disappointed. His love for the poor son worried him. His rich son would not listen to his appeals. By chance, the father and the son both met at a station where our society had a centre. The son attended the meeting. His heart was so deeply influenced that his entire attitude towards his father appeared to him as unfilial and full of ingratitude. As soon as he left the meeting, he went to his father's room, placed his head at his feet and burst into bitter sobs, apologizing to him for his ingratitude and assuring him that he would do what his father wished him to do. He said, "Beloved father, my love for money made me forget your favours, made me forget that you were the author of my being and the main

cause of my present flourishing condition, that what you wanted of me was simply to repay the debt of gratitude which I had to discharge, and after all you wished me to help my own brother who had a claim on me —of blood and of love. I am sorry that absence of gratitude in me brought on a reaction in my life which made me positively ungrateful. I have seen its horrible nature and I crave your blessings to get more of this light which has revealed to me the ugliness of my ingratitude."

So, boys, you can see that so long as a man is devoid of gratitude and is ruled by his self-love, he is not able to see his benefactors. But if he is fortunate enough to get the light which can reveal to him the ugliness of this phase of life, he would be struck with horror that he is ungrateful and would endeavour hard to become grateful.

A STUDENT. Sir, why is it that we do not, by our own efforts, see our ingratitude as such ?

TECHER. A man who is fallen in a well without ropes, will not be able to come out of it without the help of another person who is outside. But in this case the man in the well at least has a desire to get out. Hence, if any merciful man throws a rope to him, he would bind it round himself and co-operate with him to get out. In the moral world a man who is sunk in the abyss of lower life, possesses the same disability to come out himself but he lacks the desire to get out of the slough in which he has fallen. Further, he spurns every endeavour made to liberate him from it. In the last case the father had tried to show his son that he was ungrateful. But the son had resented this and, therefore, very snugly lay in the abyss of ingratitude. He was in need of the awakening of a desire in him to get out of the abyss. This desire could not awaken in him so long as he didn't realize that his life in this abyss of ingratitude was ruinous. Thus he was badly in need of a new consciousness. A new and higher consciousness cannot grow anywhere and everywhere but only in the atmosphere suited for its growth.

This wonderful moral atmosphere, therefore, is the one supreme condition for the birth of a man in the world of higher life. In the absence of this atmosphere the sinner

will never realise his sinful condition, will never see his ugly and dangerous condition and will never feel a desire to get out of it. This wonderful atmosphere not only awakens the desire in a fit soul but also gives him the power to get out of this abyss of evil. Those who are constantly breathing in this atmosphere have the greatest opportunity of their lives to sweeten their ties in various relations by developing adequate higher consciousnesses.

A STUDENT. Besides the atmosphere, Sir, are there any exercises which every fit soul has to pass through ?

TEACHER. Yes, in our society there are periods allotted for the betterment of our attitude in one or another relation. We have a period for bettering of relation between children and parents, brothers and sisters, masters and servants, etc. In all these, very great stress is laid upon the strengthening of the bond of gratitude towards those benefactors from whom we receive a constant stream of favours.

A STUDENT. Sir, do we have any benefactors besides our parents and teachers ?

TEACHER. We have millions of benefactors in the mineral world, in the vegetable world, in the animal world and in the human world. You can imagine what our fate would be if there were no atmosphere, if there were no water, if there were no sunshine, if there were no solid earth etc. etc. Again, what would be our fate if there were no vegetable world ? Both vegetarians and non-vegetarians would simply die and become extinct. This is besides countless other blessings that we receive from this world. Even today millions of animals are serving us. So far as the human world is concerned, our very existence would be impossible without its direct and indirect help. In fact, every day we are receiving contributions of millions of existences for our growth in the physical, mental and moral worlds. What is lacking is the eyes to see them. If a man were to develop this consciousness of gratitude, his joy would know no bounds. So, boys, what is needed is the eye of gratitude. In order to develop that eye, what is needed is a moral and spiritual atmosphere. May you all realize it in your own individual lives !

## DISINTERESTED SERVICE OF OTHERS DUE TO REVERENCE AND GRATITUDE

TEACHER. I have already dealt with two virtues, i.e., reverence and gratitude. The third virtue which I have to deal with today is disinterested service. This is also one of the most necessary virtues which can sweeten our lives in various relations.

A STUDENT. What do you mean by disinterested service, Sir ?

TEACHER. We have more regard for our own selves than for anybody else. In order to gratify this self we often not only ignore the rights of others but feel a disposition to injure them. Thus selfishness makes us unkind. The first two virtues which I have dealt with in the last lesson also help us to get out of the cramping shell of our little self.

A STUDENT. Will you kindly explain how reverence and gratitude take us out of our little selves ?

TEACHER. The very constitution of these virtues is based on otherism or altruism. The feeling of reverence shows me the beauties of a higher life in others and by comparison my own inferior and humbler position. It produces a tendency in me to sing the praises of the object of my reverence and by contrast see defects in myself. This feeling produces an urge in me to do something for such a higher being. Naturally, therefore, it makes me get out of my own self. Let me explain this to you by some true instances which came within my personal experience.

When I was at college, I came in contact with a highly educated man who gave up everything for propagating the teachings of the Sikh religion. He built a *gurdwara* and gave up his own service to work exclusively for it. He used to come to the Punjab and his love and enthusiasm for the

Sikh religion used to make him a welcome guest in some of the most important *gurdwaras* here. A young man developed reverence for him. He ran a shop of his own and had a good business. But his reverence for this Sikh preacher had brought such a change in him that he could not live without seeing and serving him almost every day. When the question of his marriage came, he abandoned the idea because the Sikh preacher wanted him to devote his time to the cause he held dear. For years afterwards, this young man carried on a very lucrative business but almost all his earnings went to the Sikh preacher. After the preacher died, the disciple devoted the remaining years of his life to the service of the *gurdwara* and the family of his revered leader. Thus he came out of his little self because of his deep reverence for the Sikh preacher.

A STUDENT. This is a very instructive story, Sir.

TEACHER. Indeed it is. Let me give you another story.

It was in the beginning of this century that something happened which has left an abiding impression on me. There was a young student who was studying in one of our colleges. He possessed a very high character and was of a very sweet disposition. All of a sudden it came to be known that a goldsmith who was a notorious drunkard and bad character had begun to show attraction for this noble boy. When his obsession turned into a scandal, he was given a beating by the relations of the boy. But he used always to say, "I mean no harm to the boy. I am anxious to have his *darshan*." This young boy was not only good and courageous but also very tender. One day he went and sought out this goldsmith and told him, "See my friend, your attentions are proving a scandal for me and for my family. I sympathize with you but tell me what you wish? If your wishes are proper, I will try to help you." The goldsmith said, "Sir, I deeply respect you. I don't know what has happened to me, but I feel that if I have your *darshan* every day, I can be happy." The boy said, "All right, at a particular hour I shall be passing a particular road every day. Please go and sit there and don't worry my parents." Gradually it began to dawn on the public that this man's life was

changing for the better, as the boy began to take interest in his life and led him out of the vices of drinking, etc., and he truly became a very decent man in his profession. The boy also realized that it was reverence and not any undesirable feeling that had drawn the man to him. Once the boy was at a very distant station when he received a telegram that his brother was down with cholera. The boy wired to the man asking him to proceed to the town where his brother lay and serve him. I think that there are persons alive who can bear testimony to the fact that without the least regard for his own self, this goldsmith devoted himself heart and soul to the service of the brother of his revered object. He washed his vomitings and excreta, etc., with his own hands. He grew reckless of what might happen to him. His heart sang with joy that he had a chance to serve the family of his revered object. Thus reverence not only changed that goldsmith from a wicked man to a decent man but also made him forget his self for the service of the object of his reverence.

A STUDENT. The goldsmith was indeed very fortunate in having reverence for a noble soul.

TEACHER. That he was.

There was a third incident which came to my notice and it is highly instructive. There used to live a mystic in the place where I carried on my profession. It is related that a female disciple of his was once not of very decent morals. She, however, developed reverence for the mystic and changed. The mystic was known to be a man of a clean character. This woman joined his band and served him and his followers during his life. After his death she lived all her life in the shrine of that ascetic. It was a wonderful sight to see how on anniversary occasions she would, like a fond mother, serve every pilgrim that came to that shrine. Her whole life became a life of service for the mystic, his cause and his admirers. She was looked upon by the followers of the mystic as an angelic mother. This is how she came out of her evil self and developed altruism at least in relation to her revered object and his cause.

From these instances and many more, you can understand how helpful reverence is in getting us out of the dark



prison-cell of selfishness and in bringing us out into the sunshine of altruism. Those, therefore, who belittle this feeling, show simply their utter ignorance of the nature and value of this feeling.

A STUDENT. Sir, does gratitude also produce altruism ?

TEACHER. Yes, it does. But, like reverence, its scope is also limited. A grateful man sees the beauty of the favours done to him. He sees the beauty of his benefactor as a benefactor. His heart grows soft towards him. Sometimes tears also roll down his cheek and he weeps. He feels indebted. This indebtedness produces an urge in him, as I said before, to pay off this debt of honour. In paying this debt, he has no business or trading spirit. Any return that he makes for the favours received, he considers too small. His heart is never satisfied in making returns. You have, therefore, to realize the distinction between gratitude and a spirit of business.

A STUDENT. Will you kindly explain this distinction ?

TEACHER. Some years ago, I was teaching poetry to the Matric class. There was a poem which left a deep impression on me. It also clearly revealed to me the distinction between gratitude and the trading spirit. There was a man who said that he was lying ill on the roadside. A proud man passed by him. He coldly threw a coin at him and went his way. He said that when he recovered from the trouble, he took the coin and returned it to the proud man. After he had paid him, he felt he had paid off his debt. Here was no question of gratitude. It was business. The same man again fell ill and he said that an old pair took him tenderly to their hut, and nursed him. They gave him freely of what they had in the hut. They were poor but they were sympathetic. When the man recovered, he said, "Yes, I can pay them back the price of material things they served me with, but alas ! what return would be adequate for the sympathy that they showed me !" He felt that no amount of return that he could make would adequately pay them for the love they had lavished on him. This is gratitude. A grateful heart is never satisfied with any return that it makes.

So boys, you can understand the distinction between gratitude and spirit of business.

A STUDENT. Gratitude, then, Sir, is indeed a very beautiful feeling.

TEACHER. Indeed, it is. Here I am concerned, however, with showing you how gratitude helps us to forget ourselves and grow serviceable, though within a limited sphere. I shall just give you a true story.

In my province there is a saint-musician who commands the highest respect. His *guru* was also a musician and a good man. This saint-musician learnt his lessons at his feet. Though he has become far more famous than his *guru* yet his gratitude has made him not only very humble towards his *guru's* family but also serviceable to it. I heard an incident of his life. He was invited to a town to inspire with his *bhajans* thousands of persons who attended his gatherings. He took the young daughter of his *guru* there. But it is said that all the time that he was singing, he seated the girl on his shoulders. This girl wanted ivory bangles. This saint, who was the idol of thousands, again took her on his shoulders about three miles to a neighbouring town and when he reached the shop, he placed her in his lap and thus got the ivory bangles fitted on her arms. The man who related the story to me said that it was a sight for the gods to see. For the last several years he has been in various ways serving the family of his *guru* and propagating his glory.

Most of you must have heard of that masterpiece of philosophy known as Plato's *Dialogues*. Some of them are a masterful exposition of the teachings of Socrates. Plato had the deepest gratitude for Socrates and though Socrates himself left nothing in writing, this disciple of his preserved his utterances in Socrates' name. He must have spent several years of his life in perfecting these dialogues. But the reverence for his master and his teachings made him forget his self and, even while giving to the world his immortal philosophy, he did not think of himself. It is the world that has discovered him as the author of those dialogues. If Plato had not possessed deep gratitude for Socrates, he would not have undertaken the Himalayan task of so very beauti-

fully and lucidly explaining what Socrates taught. The grateful heart does not count the cost when the service is to be done to the object of gratitude.

A STUDENT. Sir, does this feeling of gratitude give a man joy in serving his benefactor or does he feel it only a duty ?

TEACHER. This is a good question, my boy. Every altruistic feeling gives the man a joy in its gratification as every selfish feeling gives a joy to the selfish being when he satisfies it,

A STUDENT. Would you kindly illustrate it ?

TEACHER. Once I happened to go to a family which I counted among my friends. That friend of mine was an old man more than 70 years of age and his wife was also of nearly that age. When I entered the house I found the old lady at home. During the course of her conversation the lady asked me, "Cannot you ask your friend (meaning her husband) to permit me to cook for him ? He seems to be over-solicitous about me. He thinks I am too old to do cooking for him." I said, "Why do you mind it ?" With tears in her eyes she very significantly stretched her hand and said. "Fifty years ago he took my hand and for the last fifty years he has served me as a loyal husband. Would it not be ingratitude on my part not to do this little service for him ?" Her moving words touched me deeply. Here is a case of a grateful heart which was miserable because it was not allowed the chance to serve. In fact, we should always realize that gratitude is a higher force or feeling. It can never find satisfaction unless it gratifies itself. Its gratification lies in unselfish service. If mankind could but realize the wonders of this feeling, i.e., how it softens our heart and makes us tender and other-seeking and how thereby it removes a lot of misery and produces an amount of good, humanity would become serious about the cultivation of this beautiful sentiment. All hard-heartedness, injustice and rudeness that we find in the world is due to the fact that the heart of man is selfish or self-seeking.

In my next lesson I will deal exclusively with altruism.

## THE NATURE AND UTILITY OF ALTRUISM

TEACHER. To-day I am to talk on altruism. What is altruism? The opposite of all forms of ego-love is altruism. Through ego-loves one develops regard for one's self only. There are many altruistic feelings. The more common from amongst them are justice, sympathy, charity, benevolence, forgiveness, public spirit, philanthropy, etc.

A STUDENT. But, Sir, why should we develop altruism?

TEACHER. The one great reason for the development of altruism is that its opposite feelings—like selfishness—make life impossible.

A STUDENT. How, Sir?

TEACHER. Suppose the sun were selfish. What would happen? It would refuse to give us light. Would life be possible then? Suppose the earth were to refuse to give us shelter. What would happen? Would life be possible for us? Suppose the vegetable kingdom refused to give us grains, vegetables, fruits, etc., would then life be possible for us? Apparently, what does the sun get by giving us light? Apparently, what does the earth get by giving us abode? Apparently, what does the vegetable kingdom gain by giving us food for our sustenance? Nothing. They would not cease to be the sun, or the earth, or the vegetable kingdom, because they refuse us their blessings. They existed in their own right before man came in the arena of life. It is they who have made the manifestation of man possible and yet if they were selfish, man would cease to exist. You can thus see how horrible selfishness is and how beneficent giving is. Again, suppose, by any means, all the future mothers were to become utterly selfish in relation to their begotten children. Humanity would come to a full-stop, as no child would grow up under universal neglect. In the same way, selfish govern-

ment is a curse because it receives taxes and does nothing on its own part. In the same way, a selfish family, a selfish community, a selfish race will bring about its own downfall. We know that nations rise to the extent to which they have advanced in altruism. And they decline when they develop selfishness. In this twentieth century it does not require anyone to tell us that selfishness, when taken to its logical extreme, spells the extinction of a selfish individual, a selfish family, a selfish society or a selfish nation, I hope you can now realize that selfishness is a horrible thing.

A STUDENT. Selfishness, Sir, is indeed horrible. But will you illustrate by some true stories of life how it proves a curse?

TEACHER. In the columns of *The Science-Grounded Religion*, once, I published from European papers a story of a very mean woman. This woman was very fond of money. She married several rich husbands one after another for their money and pocketed it. She then married a young millionaire whom also she fleeced. One day her husband was in difficulty and he prayed to her for help. She refused and he died in trouble. She had only one son. She compelled him to live on his own pittance and yet she was a multi-millionaire in terms of Indian coinage. She left several crores of rupees but her selfishness made her an unnatural wife and an unnatural mother. So you can see the horror of selfishness.

A STUDENT. Indeed, Sir.

TEACHER. I give you another story. There was a rich man who owned £ 25,000. But he still used to keep his wife and children on a starvation allowance. When he died, his wife went to the banks to claim money. But she was told that her husband had withdrawn the money. The wife was stunned to hear it. For some time she could not understand what he had done with the money. Then all of a sudden she remembered that before dying he had made an appeal to her to bury his coat with him. She suspected that the money must be there. She applied to a court of law to allow her to exhume the dead body. The permission was given. In the presence of the police the coffin was taken out of the grave. Then the coat was taken out and it was found that in the lining of

the coat the dead man had carefully sewn the money he had withdrawn from the bank. Such is the utter selfishness of a human heart. The selfish man ceases to have any consideration even for his wife and his begotten children.

A STUDENT. Are such incidents possible, Sir?

TEACHER. They are not only possible but are actually taking place in everyday life. Selfishness carries a man to such an extent that he becomes even his own enemy and injures himself. I personally know a man, a goldsmith by caste, who received education, joined Government service and hoarded the huge sum of one lakh. His love for money became such an obsession with him that when he fell seriously ill, he would not change his bed-sheet as it would cost him laundry charges. He would not send for a doctor because he would be charged fee. He would not take medicine because he would have to pay for it. The solicitation of all his dear and near ones failed to influence him to spend money on himself. He refused to save himself and died. It is certain that medical help and nursing would have saved him.

A STUDENT. This is horrible. Sir.

TEACHER. I give you a still more horrible case.

There is story of a multimillionaire in Europe who was reported to have died of starvation with a bank book pressed close to his heart. This book showed an account of millions to his credit. And yet he died of starvation!

When these selfish persons are not able to do anything for their family and children and even for themselves, it is idle to expect that they will do anything for others. I give you an authentic story of a rich man whom I knew. He had no son and yet he died leaving nothing in charity. He was a Hindu. According to our custom, some charity is given in the name of the person at the time of his death. When this man was lying half-unconscious, his wife made a declaration of giving one lakh in charity. This dying man heard this promise in his semi-conscious state and he suddenly opened his eyes and said, "No charity, please, no charity. Who says I give charity?" So saying, he collapsed and died. Just see that even when the man was dying and he fully knew that he was going to part with all his money for ever, still he could not

tolerate the idea of giving anything in charity. What a terrible havoc selfishness works with our mind and soul. I hope you can now understand how selfishness makes monsters of men.

A STUDENT. Selfishness, Sir, is indeed a very damaging and degrading passion.

TEACHER. Selfishness does not affect only individuals but it affects even corporate life. I give you some instances. There was a village consisting of about a hundred houses. Some five or six dacoits entered the house of a wealthy man. All the other villagers locked their houses from inside and did not go to his help. The dacoits not only robbed that man but robbed as many other houses as they could, before day-break. All the papers which took note of it said that if the villagers had shown a bold front collectively, no one would have been robbed. But every selfish neighbour thought of himself with the result that lots of families were robbed, thus proving that when every one is for himself and his own ends, then the devil is for all.

As against this, I know of a village near my town where the dacoits entered a rich man's house. The *Nambardar* asked his son who was a great athlete to go to the wealthy neighbour's help. This giant made a rush at the dacoits, and others inspired by his example followed him. The result was that the dacoits were caught and severely punished. The heroic self-sacrifice of a single man saved the village from the curse of the dacoits.

The entire history of India in the past shows how selfishness kept several princes disunited so that a single invader with a small army was able to vanquish them all.

Again, in our big business concerns it is selfishness which brings about their ruin. Whenever this selfishness prevails we find the ravages wrought by it.

A STUDENT. Thus, Sir, selfishness spells the ruin not only of individuals but even of our corporate life.

TEACHER. Indeed so. As opposed to this, the life of altruism brings peace and higher joy to individuals and strengthens and develops the corporate life. I just give you illustrations.

I read the true story of a woman whose life was full of

tragedies. She married a very decent and wealthy husband and was blessed with two sons. One day while her elder child aged about 5 years was playing, he accidentally fell down and died suddenly. The woman felt simply bowled out of life. For months together she was plunged into the vortex of sorrow. Her heart was hardly healed when her second son also died suddenly. This was too much for her. She appeared almost unhinged in mind. After several months she knew that she was to have a baby. This gave her some relief. She was blessed with a daughter. Two or three years after that she was blessed with another daughter. She felt happy. When the girls grew up, she was telling them not to marry because marriage meant separation from her and she could not bear the separation; but one after another both daughters married. As ill luck would have it, both of them died. And thereafter her husband died. Here was a case of a terrible tragedy. This woman went about as one demented. She could not find peace anywhere. In this frenzied condition she went to see her once class mate who was in charge of a residential school. Here this sorrow-sticken woman found a heaven of repose. She started looking after the needs of this or that girl and after a week or so, she undertook more voluntary duties and within a month or two she was a changed woman. The school got a most devoted mother and this sad woman got the divine joy of forgetting her sorrow in serving the needs of others. From this, you can see that even the deepest wounds caused by sorrow get healed up by the balm of service of others...

When this altruism becomes a real force, it works miracles. An American multi-millionaire with whom altruism was the very breath of life, anonymously established several charities and started an office with twenty clerks whose chief function was to find out and carry on correspondence with several centres for any suitable charitable institutions to be founded there out of his funds. We are familar how millions of men open offices in order to amass money. Here was a rare case of a man who opened an office not for the purpose of amassing money but with the purpose of *giving it away*... Altruism is, indeed, the holist spark in the life of a human soul.



## GOOD AND BAD WISHES AND ACTS

TEACHER. To wish well to others is one of the most difficult things for man, so much so that if we say that wishing well to another is almost impossible for millions of hearts, it would not be far from the truth.

A STUDENT. Why is wishing well, Sir, so difficult an affair ?

TEACHER. In everyday life we see that if there is anything very prominent among men of the same family, the same community, the same profession, the same department, the same vocation etc., it is jealousy. A man who is himself wealthy cannot bear to see another person getting wealthier. If a man is himself blessed with sons and daughters, he does not bear to see another being blessed with a greater number of children. If a man builds a house another becomes jealous of it. If one gets a job, there are a number of others who get depressed. In fact, the sight of progress of one is a bitter pill to another. Under such circumstances it is not possible for such persons to wish well to others.

A STUDENT. Will you kindly illustrate this by stories or incidents from life ?

TEACHER. Yes, by all means. There was a lady well-known to me. She was the wife of a millionaire. She lived in a palace, drove in a four-wheeler, went about bedecked with ornaments worth thousands and clothes worth hundreds and literally rolled in the lap of plenty, and yet because this lady had no child of her own, she was every time so adversely affected by the news of the birth of a child to any of her acquaintances or relatives that she could not taste a morsel of food for the whole day. She felt very uncomfortable but she could not shake off this destructive feeling. How could it be possible for such a lady to wish well to the women who are blessed with children?

There was another lady who had five sons of her own while her sister-in-law had no child. After years, the sister-in-law was blessed with a son. This woman, the mother of five sons, was so consumed with jealousy that she lost her peace of mind from that day and found relief by arranging to get the new babe drugged with morphia in milk and to see it dead. The people were shocked to hear this but they could not do anything.

There were two firms of advocates. Both were at the top in their profession. If any of the partners of one firm came to know that the other firm had earned more in some month, he would feel extremely miserable for the whole of the next month. None of them could find satisfaction in the fact that they had enough to eat and to spare. Is it possible for such men to wish economic prosperity to one another ?

Sometimes jealousy assumes amusing forms. A man was married to a highly educated girl. He was the envy of all and yet when his cousin married another girl as well educated as his own wife, he was filled with such a consuming flame of jealousy that he was miserable for a number of days. This is because he could not bear similar good fortune to fall to another.

There is an authentic story of a student who was not able to get a first division at all. He knew his limitations. But when a class-fellow of his won a first class honours, he writhed in agony, because he was not able to secure a first division himself. He did not wish anybody else the glory of the first division. Like a dog in the manger such persons would neither partake of the food themselves nor let others do so.

This jealousy sometimes goes to deplorable extremes. A man had two wives. He had neglected the senior wife and was infatuated with the junior. The senior wife became very jealous and was determined to make the life of the junior gall and wormwood. So she hit upon a very strange device. She tore out both of her own eyes with hot irons. Somebody asked her why it was that she plunged herself into permanent darkness. She said : "Now that I am blind, both the junior wife and my husband shall have to attend to me. They can,

therefore, never live as happily as before. They have now on their shoulders the burden of a blind woman."

Jealousy makes men wish evil even to their kith and kin. A man died leaving a widow and orphans. One of the sons of the deceased person passed a university examination. When the good news was carried to the boy's uncle, of his nephew's brilliant success, he had not even the courtesy to disguise his shameful feeling of jealousy and said : "Of what good is the success of my nephew to me ! Come and congratulate me when my own son gets a similar success." When the widowed mother heard this, she burst into tears saying : "Even the surviving elderly member of the family refuses to share our happiness." From these few instances you can realise that those who cannot bear to see another rise cannot wish well to their own relatives, friends, neighbours and co-workers.

A STUDENT. Why does a man grow jealous of another ? How does it profit him ?

TEACHER. A man grows jealous of another because he is selfish. He wants the whole world for himself and leave nothing for anybody else. A man is not jealous because he is short of good things. He is jealous because another is happy and prosperous. He finds satisfaction in the misfortune of another and misery in his good luck. This is irrespective of the fact whether he himself is needy or prosperous. This is the worst feature of selfishness.

A STUDENT. How can the world go on if we feel miserable in the progress, welfare or betterment of others and happy when they are down on their luck ?

TEACHER. It is this attitude of man which has made the wheels of society difficult to move. Humanity is running its powers to waste in wishing evil and doing evil to one another. If everyone of us were to wish well and do good to others, this earth would be a heaven. We shall have ideal communities, ideal nations and ideal societies. It is because we suffer from the cancer of over-regard for our little selves as against under-regard for others that we feel a disposition to wish evil to others.

A STUDENT. Is it a sin, Sir, to wish oneself to grow better, higher and more prosperous than another ?

TEACHER. Progress is no crime, nay, it is a birth-right of

every individual. Every man who is worth his salt should have a desire and earnestness to make progress. But we should not desire to progress by wading through the blood and trampling on the bones of others. Desire for one's progress is not in any way inconsistent with a desire that others may also make similar progress. If I am a cripple my desire is perfectly justified if I want to be cured of my defect. But suppose I am not cured, then it is wholly unbecoming on my part to wish others also to be crippled. You know the story of a hunchback who was asked if he would like to be cured of his hunchback or he would like the whole world to turn hunchbacks. He said that he would like to see the world suffer from the same defect, so that he may have a hearty laugh at them as they had at him. This is inhuman.

Everyone of us should have an earnest desire for progress. If we have no desire for progress we lapse into the state of animals. But in wishing progress for ourselves we should not wish misfortune to others.

A STUDENT. How is it possible, Sir, for a man intent on his rise to wish the same rise to another ?

TEACHER. Does a father get jealous of his son because his son rises to a position higher than his ? Does a mother get jealous of her daughter if she gets higher education and is luckier than herself in matrimony ?

A STUDENT. In the case of parents, Sir, this would be unnatural.

TEACHER. Why should it be unnatural in the case of parents, but not so in the case of others ? It is because parents find joy in the joy of their children and find pride in their rise. Normally, every human being should have such a mental attitude.

A STUDENT. How is it possible for others to have such a mental attitude ?

TEACHER. What the parental instinct makes possible for parents can be made possible for all mankind by higher bonds of altruism. We have got innumerable instances on record of persons who possess an altruistic feeling which makes such a mental attitude not only possible but pleasurable for them.

A STUDENT. Will you kindly give us some illustrations ?

TEACHER. Yes, I can give you a number of instances to illustrate this. In the Christian literature and among scientists we come across several persons who have found joy in promoting the good of others even at a great sacrifice. *The Bombay Chronicle* of April 17, 1938, contains a quotation of a wonderful sacrifice made by Dr. Langudakis, a noted physician of Cairo, who deliberately contracted leprosy in order to experiment upon himself the efficacy of a serum which he had developed as a cure for the disease. The Doctor said: "If I succeed, thousands including myself would be cured; if I fail, I will be just another scientist who will fall a sacrifice." Here is a wonderful case of a man who found joy in risking his own life in order to save others. This is to have an altruistic feeling. For such a person it is impossible to wish ill to lepers in whom he was interested.

There is, again, the wonderful story of Abraham Lincoln, who saw a pig weltering in a mire and unable to come out of it. He jumped into the ditch and took the pig out. His friend who was with him asked, "Why did you do so?" Abraham Lincoln said that the agony of the pig who was not able to get out of the ditch had so deeply affected him that had he not saved him he would not have had a wink of sleep the next night. The man who could be so deeply moved at the sight of the agony of another cannot but wish well and do well to others. For such a man it is not possible to wish misery to a pig or other suffering animals. Abraham Lincoln could not bear the sight of crores of human children being treated as chattels and bought and sold as slaves. The sight of the suffering of the slaves made it impossible for him to keep silent. He, therefore, not only wished them freedom but risked his very life and reputation to gain it for them. He actually had to wage a war for them and he found peace only when he had abolished slavery in America. Here is an instance of a heart which found joy in the freedom and progress of negroes and which felt pride in the fact that it had opened a high road for their further progress as human beings. This mental attitude is far richer than the mental attitude of the parents for their children and it is far wider in the scope and in the magnitude of its blessings.

It is said of Sir Ganga Ram that when one day news was brought to him that a man had died and left three widows, who were dependent on him, in utter destitution, he burst into tears. He not only helped them immediately but arranged to teach them the art of tailoring so that they could maintain themselves independently. Thereafter, this same feeling of mercy suggested to him that there were lots of other widows in similar straitened circumstances and that he should be up and doing to remove their sorrows and sufferings. He, therefore, founded institutions or industrial homes for widows. His work in the cause of widows spread far and wide. Gradually the scope of his charities widened and he is reported to have left fifty lacs in charity. A man whom the sight of sufferings moved to tears and to making such huge sacrifices cannot but wish well to these suffering fellow human beings and do well to them. It is not possible for such a heart to wish evil to them or to do them evil.

We can, therefore, see that a certain set of feelings makes a man wish evil and do evil to others and another set of feelings makes one wish well and do good to others. So long as man is dominated by the first set of feelings, it is impossible for him to wish well and do well to others. The joy of such a person will be the joy of a cannibal. He lives upon the blood and flesh of his fellow human beings. Those who are dominated by one or another feeling comprised in the second set will find joy in wishing well and doing well to persons coming under the purview of that feeling. Sir Ganga Ram, therefore, felt for widows, the aged and the sick. Dr. Lagudakis felt for lepers. Abraham Lincoln felt for slaves. Their feelings, therefore, though directed to the removal of sorrow of different groups of people, made them altruistic and therefore gave them the capacity to wish well to those particularly for whom they felt.

A STUDENT. Cannot such persons wish well and do well to the entire human and the sub-human kingdoms ?

TEACHER. Such a universal love for the good of all human and sub-human kingdoms is not possible for those who have evolved only one or another altruistic feeling. Such a divine state of things is possible only for the Devatma—the complete and all-sided lover of Truth and Goodness—and Devatma

alone.

A STUDENT. What is meant by the Devatma ?

TEACHER. Devatma is one who possesses not only all the altruistic feelings but even *Dev Shakties*—the highest psychic forces of complete love for truth and goodness and complete hatred for untruth and evil. It is possible for the Devatma alone to wish well and do good to *all* existences in human and sub-human kingdoms.

This is the Devatma whom we Dev Samajists worship. It is by the highest psychic influences of the Devatma that thousands of persons have undergone marvellous changes and developed one or other altruistic forces for which they possessed hereditary fitness. It is in the light of Devatma that we realise that by wishing ill or doing ill to another we harm ourselves. In his light we see that if we want to build ourselves we must build others.

A STUDENT. I wish we all possessed such feelings which could enable us to wish well and do well to others. But the new problem that you have stated that by harming others we harm ourselves and by building others we build ourselves is not clear to me. I am anxious to have light shed upon it. If I am convinced that by harming others I harm myself and by building others I build myself, I shall be earnest in developing altruistic feelings. Will you kindly throw some light on this problem ?

TEACHER. It is late to-day. I reserve this topic for the next talk.

## THE INEVITABILITY OF LAW

TEACHER. I want to explain to you to-day that by harming others, we harm ourselves. You can understand this better if you understand the relation of an organ to its organism.

Suppose you keep your arm raised up and never use it, what would happen to it ?

A STUDENT. Sir, it would get paralysed. I saw a *faqir* whose arm had actually stiffened like that and it was utterly worthless to him.

TEACHER. You can, then, understand that if any organ ceases to be useful to the organism, it withers away and dies. In the same way, if an organ is working unhealthily what happens ? I hope you understand what is meant by a limb working unhealthily ?

A STUDENT. A limb, Sir, is said to be working unhealthily when instead of contributing to the good of the organism it begins to contribute to its injury.

TEACHER. Yes, that is exactly so. In the same way if any organ becomes incurably septic, every attempt is made to cut it out of the organism, because instead of contributing to the well-being of the organism, it tends to destroy it. A part has a right to exist only to the extent that it contributes to the good of the whole organism. If you understand this relation of a part to its whole, then you will be able to understand the relation of the human personality to the vast organism called the universe. Man is a part of the universe. He is, therefore, subject to the laws of the universe. He lives because he fulfils the laws of evolution and he dies when he offends against them. It does not lie within the competence of any man to defy the laws of Nature with impunity. His only true and safe position in the universe is to adjust himself to the laws of life or growth. What is proper for man is to understand these laws and to obey them. It is disastrous for him to shut his eyes to these laws and to militate against them.



A STUDENT. Would you kindly illustrate the nature and potency of these laws by some examples ?

TEACHER. When I was an advocate, I had gone far into the interior of a district, to a village where the *tehsildar* had his camp. I had to drive through a desert. At certain places the villagers used to keep very big jars filled with water for the thirsty travellers to drink from. These jars were usually kept buried up to the neck in the ground. The mouth was kept covered. Once a child lost his way and came to the place where such a huge jar was kept. This child felt thirsty, took off the cover of the jar and drank water. As his feet had become very hot by the scorching sand through which he had walked, he put his feet into this jar and unfortunately slipped into it. When the next traveller came to the jar to drink water from it, he found the tiny child aged about three or four years drowned in the jar. Here the child was ignorant. He had no knowledge of the laws but even then the laws worked and brought about his end. In the same way, only two years ago the dead body of a school boy was found from a municipal reservoir of water kept for the purpose of watering the plants, because he had slipped into it while drinking water. He was the only child of his parents. The world had full sympathy for the parents but the law had none. The law of Nature is neither sympathetic nor anti-pathetic. It is simply a law of Nature. Once it is set in motion, its working is inevitable. No cries or lamentations can deter it from its fateful march. It behoves us, therefore, to understand the inevitability of law and to adjust our life accordingly. In the last earthquake at Quetta, a great philanthropist of the Punjab died. It is said that he had arrived at Quetta only a day or two before. The earth shook, the house collapsed and this great charitable man was buried under it and died. Here is the case of a man whom the world would have wished to live. But because the law was fulfilled, he suffered by its inevitability. The law neither regards the opinion of the world nor disregards it. The law is neither intelligent nor unintelligent. The law is simply a uniform process which is universal and inevitable in its working.

It is said about the great scientist Tyndall that he was ill and requested his wife to give him a dose of medicine. His wife

loved him devotedly, but by mistake she took the dose from another bottle which contained poison. As soon as Tyndall took it, he said : "Beloved, you have killed me." And Tyndall died. The world had the deepest sympathy for Mrs. Tyndall but not so the law. The law never can take into account if the man who is going to suffer is a scientist or a sinner. It never can make allowances because the mistake is made in ignorance. All that counts with the law is that the conditions for setting it in motion are fulfilled. Once it is in motion its process is inevitable.

From these few instances you can realise that they who break the law on the physical plane even in ignorance or even by an accident, have to suffer. We should, therefore, try to understand this aspect of the law, for its ignorance leads to very great dangers for us all.

A STUDENT. The inevitability of the law, Sir, is simply terrible!

TEACHER. Let me give you another aspect of the inevitable working of the law.

Once I was present in a house when a baby was born. The whole body of this baby was covered with peculiar eruptions. A doctor was sent for and he immediately asked the father : "Have you been suffering from some venereal disease ?" The father had to hang down his head in shame and to confess it. The doctor said : "My man ! your sins are visited on your child. It won't survive. But if it survives its entire life would be a burden to it." Happily the girl died in a couple of days.

There is a widow who has got only one son aged ten years. Three or four times, he had been apparently cured and yet he is having relapse after relapse. His poor mother is going about from one town to another, consulting the best physicians and up to now she has not been able to get the child completely cured.

There is a woman who is now nearly 36 or 37 years of age and who is perfectly demented. Her father was a terrible drunkard. She grew up an imbecile and up to now she is a burden on her relatives. Here is a terrible case of a poor woman suffering for the sins of her father.

These few instances can give you another aspect of the inevitability of the law. The law was fulfilled when the children were conceived. Their destinies were determined, before they were born, by the wrongs of their parents. The tragedies which were to be enacted in their lives had their origin from the moment of their conception. This is because there is no question of justice or injustice with the law. *The law is inevitable.* This tells us what a responsibility lies on the heads of the parents themselves.

A STUDENT. In that case, Sir, society must select would-be parents.

TEACHER. Indeed so. The whole civilized society is feeling the need of selecting parents for future children. Man is not an isolated entity. He is inseparably bound up with others. All his thoughts and actions not only affect him but have also a lasting influence on others, because he is a part of Nature. I will deal with this aspect after I have finished with the inevitability and immutability of the law. Unless we realise what law is, we will not be able to understand how the law holds good in everyday conduct and how inevitable it is in its working on us and on the things and persons around us.

The third aspect of the law is that it forges the chains for man's slavery to bad habits. When man begins life, he has no habits. He has drives. He forms habits by the repetition of thought and action, and by and by his habits get so strong a hold on him that it does not lie in his power to break them even though they may threaten his very life. I give you a few instances. Once in my college days when I returned home during vacation, I went to see one of my benefactors. I found there seated on a cot a highly educated man who had been an accountant in P.W.D. but who was stark mad. I enquired from my benefactor what had happened to the man. He said that the man was given to drinking. So long as his wife was living with him, he was safe. She would control the quantity of his drink. By chance his wife had to go out of station. In her absence he lost his sanity. Several of his friends, including the doctor who was treating him, applied themselves heart and soul to restoring his sanity. To his good fortune, he was cured. He resumed his duties. The doctors told him that if at any time he drank

hard, he would never again recover his sanity. For some months, he controlled himself. But the habit was too strong for him. He could not resist the temptation and he drank again. He became insane once more. This is how we forge the chains of slavery to evil habits. The chain of evil habit coils itself around the heart like a serpent to gnaw and stifle it. Thus the law is equally true in the moral world also.

In my town, one of my neighbours, who was a *patwari*, had become notorious for taking bribes. He came to trouble. He was arrested and convicted and sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of three thousand rupees. We all expected that this punishment must have chastened the soul of the man and made him honest. In jail he was put in charge of the jail-garden and became a warder. I was amused to hear that from the jail itself he used to send vegetables to the members of his family and even some money. When he had served the period of his sentence and came out, some of his relatives took pity on him and employed him in their firm.

One of these employers complained to me that the man had abused his kindness. He soiled his hands there by illegal gratification with the result that their firm suffered a heavy loss. What a dreadful case of a moral imbecile, and yet he was one of the brightest men in his line ! All his intellect and all his sufferings failed to break the chains of the habit of dishonesty which he had unfortunately formed.

There was a peculiar case of a highly educated man who formed the habit of staring at women and cherishing an undesirable attitude towards them. Even in decent societies, he would prove a nuisance for women. Several families shut their doors against him. From several respectable gatherings he was deliberately shut out. It is surprising to see that though all this disgrace was heaped on him, he could not learn a lesson. His habit was terribly strong for him. He was helpless.

It was perhaps judge Lindsay who recorded a very pathetic and tragic incident of a woman who was man-mad. She served in a big firm as a saleswoman. She was otherwise a perfectly decent woman. But if ever she was alone with a man, she lost entire control on herself. Once her boss who held her in very high esteem and who had no inkling of this weakness of hers,

happened to be alone with her. He was surprised to see her attitude. She fell and so did her boss. After her fall, she dropped at the feet of her boss and wept bitter tears. She prayed to him not to divulge her secret. Such was the weakness which the thoughts and actions had brought about in the life of the woman who had the reputation of being one of the most decent and dependable women.

The moral law is that if we derive pleasure from an object or person or from the gratification of a desire, we feel an impulse to repeat it. If this repetition goes on for some time, we become addicted to it. If we continue to indulge in that pleasure, we develop a love for it. When this desire becomes a love, it becomes terrible. It requires a master soul to get us free from it. Habits are never forgiven. They don't require a deity to forgive them. They require a liberator who should break the chains and give freedom to the slaves. This moral law is also inevitable in its results. Let a man entertain a particular current of thought and adopt a particular line of action. Let him repeat them and he will find that he is getting hopelessly addicted to them. The same is true in the spiritual world.

A STUDENT. I have understood, Sir, that in the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual worlds there is the reign of law. Whether we wish or not, we are worked upon by the law once it is set in motion. In our own town seven persons were found dead in a room because, in order to escape cold, they had shut all the doors and windows but kept some coal burning. There is a blind boy in our neighbourhood about whom it is reported that he was born blind because his father was suffering from a virulent type of venereal disease. So far as habits are concerned, we see this drama in everyday life.

But what I have not been able to understand is how by harming others we harm ourselves and how by building others we build ourselves.

TEACHER. I have made it clear to you that in the case of human organism a useless organ must die, that a diseased limb has to be amputated from the organism. It means that whatever organ threatens to harm the organism deserves to be removed. This amputated organ naturally withers and dies. If you can understand the cosmos as an organism and man as

a part of it, it will not be difficult for you to understand that in the *law-bound universe* an organ which is either useless to the cosmic organism or is harmful and impedes progress is, by the very process of evolution, weeded out. Thus by harming the cosmic organism, man offends against the law of evolution and therefore suffers. I will try to make this point clearer to you in the next talk.

## BY HARMING OTHERS WE HARM OURSELVES

TEACHER. I undertook in my last lecture to explain to you how man is a part of the universe and how by harming others he harms himself. Before I go to the cosmic relations of man let me confine myself to one part, i.e., the human kingdom. Let me explain to you how man is a part of humanity.

I told you in my last lecture that an organ when cut off from its organism withers and dies away. Is this law true in the case of man as a part of humanity? You must have read the story of Alexander Selkirk. He was ship-wrecked on an island uninhabited by man. He was thus forcibly cut off from mankind. His experiences have been preserved in the form of a book, *Robinson Crusoe*, written by Daniel Defoe. It was difficult for Alexander Selkirk to retain his hold even on his mother-tongue. In order to keep a grip on the language he used to read loudly to himself the Bible which he had with him. He forgot all etiquette of how to deal with men and women. His life as an intellectual and moral being suffered extremely. It was also a question with him, how long he was to bear the loneliness and keep intact his sanity. Cut off from mankind, the distinctly human part of man practically withers and dies.

Some years ago, a Christian missionary took charge of two human children, both girls, who had been brought up by wolves and from whose den they had been rescued. They had in fact ceased to be human children. They lived naked, walked on all fours, subsisted on raw meat, howled like wolves, slept during day and prowled at night. It was a Himalayan task for the missionary to bring them to human ways. If clothed they would tear the clothes into pieces. Even in cold and chilly winter nights they would tear the cover into pieces. They would sometimes jump on a carcase and begin to eat its raw flesh. They howled at night and made several attempts to run away to their wolf-foster-parents. It is said that both of them died at an early

age—one at the age of about ten or twelve and the other at about eighteen. If they had lived long, they would have shown how their isolation from humanity had permanently impaired their human side of life.

It is said that Akbar the Great kept some children in Gang Mahal under the charge of deaf and dumb persons. These children were brought into the Mahal when they were babies and had learnt no language. It is said that Akbar the Great wanted to know what God's language was. He thought that children when kept outside the influence of man would reveal God's language. The result was that all the children grew up dumb. The only language that they learnt was a peculiar sound. They learnt this peculiar sound because they used to hear it made by a donkey-driver while he drove his asses near about the Mahal. Thus human children cut off from humanity failed to acquire any language at all.

One of my acquaintances was convicted for sedition and sentenced to solitary confinement for some months. When he came out of the jail, he said : " I thought I would go mad, and I felt that death was a happy release from that lonely life. It was then that I realised how utterly lost we are when cut off from mankind."

All the ambitions that we entertain, all the aspirations that we long for, all the dreams that we dream, all the business that we carry on, all the sorrows that we suffer, all the joy that we experience, in fact, all occupied, and useful life is possible only when we live in society. If we did not live in mankind even the position of royalty will have no fascination for us, the mountains of gold and silver will have no meaning for us, arts and sciences, architecture and engineering, paintings and sculpture, poetry and drama, etc., will neither be possible for us nor have relish for us. If we did not live among mankind, progress will have no meaning for us—why would we produce work of art, why would we invent locomotives or aeroplanes, why would we produce poetry and literature, why would we start institutions and asylums, why would we shed tears for others and laugh in the joys of others? If we did not live in human society, all human virtues—sympathy, charity, benevolence, generosity, forgiveness, philanthropy, etc.,—will have no meaning or fascination for us. Thus we can see that everything human in which



we are interested and every progress in human life which we have made is due to the fact that we live in society. This evidence is full of meaning. It proves that we are a part of mankind; we wither away and die when we are cut off from it and we grow and develop when we live as its useful parts.

A STUDENT. Sir, I understand that man can neither live nor progress without humanity. But it is not clear to me how by harming others I harm myself and by building others I build myself?

TEACHER. In order to understand this problem, we have first to understand what is meant by harming and building ourselves. Suppose a man develops slavery to money or lust, does he harm himself or does he build himself?

A STUDENT. Kindly show us how he harms himself by his slavery to money or lust?

TEACHER. Once I was at Bombay putting up in a *dharmasala* when some visitors came to stay there. One of them was suffering from a peculiar disease. He could not shut his mouth. All the twenty four hours his mouth remained open. He was a young lad of 19 or 20 years. I asked his maternal uncle as to what the trouble with the boy was. He said that the boy was married when he was quite a child. His excesses at a premature age had brought about that strange disease. In fact, he had lost control over his facial muscles. He had been brought to Bombay to consult the best doctors there. This is an example of slavery to lust.

There was another case of a handsome young man in my native town who got a third attack of a venereal disease and that proved the end of his life. When he died, he was hardly 25 years of age. He was unmarried. But he had surrendered his soul to a prostitute. The result was that in spite of his two previous attacks, he was not able to control himself and lost his life because of this slavery.

There was another married young man belonging to a very good family and drawing a very decent salary who had a beautiful wife alive. But he was not satisfied with his own wife. He fell under the charms of a prostitute and one day he was found dead at the foot of the staircase of the prostitute. Whether his death was due to an accident or to the jealousy of another

*paramour* of the prostitute, is not known. But this fact is incontrovertible that his slavery to lust brought about his premature end and the widowhood of his wife.

It is said of the Nawab of an India State that his slavery to lust had made him so woman-mad that he had nearly one hundred and twenty-five women in his *harem*. He became so utterly exhausted that he suffered from insomnia. He was not able to get a wink of sleep for nights on end. One night, he saw his groom on a broken bedstead in sound sleep. He thought there was something very particular about the cot which gave his groom such a sound sleep. He went down, asked his groom to leave the cot and himself lay down there. But as was only natural, he found no sleep even there. He did not attribute the cause of insomnia to his exhausted nerves due to venery. But he attributed it to time and place. He did not enjoy thirty summers. Most of the nawabs and princes in India have come to a premature end because of slavery to lust.

A STUDENT. In these cases, Sir, each man harmed himself because of lust.

TEACHER. Let me, now, take the case of slavery to money. It is a common opinion among men that money brings happiness. This is an opinion based on fancy. In fact, more money brings more worries and, therefore, misery. There is a true story of a wealthy man who used to wake up at night several times. Whenever he heard or fancied to hear a sound in the room in which his safe was kept, he would go into that room, open the safe, count the money and then go back to rest. This constant strain and worry cost him his sleep and peace of mind and ultimately brought about his collapse.

This is how slavery to money harmed both his body and mind.

There was a man who lost all his liquid money in speculation by his son. He had enough property left in lands and buildings and yet the loss of the liquid money produced so much agony of mind in him that he would literally roll on earth and weep bitter tears. For months together his life was a terrible burden to him. The strain on his body really shortened his life. In another case money brought about the death of a wealthy woman. She had deposited her money with a firm and that firm

failed. She received such a shock that she threw herself into a well and thus cut short her life. Such examples can be multiplied. You can then understand how slavery to money brings about the ruin of body and mind. In one of my previous lectures, I gave you a number of instances of how slavery to money made a millionaire die of starvation.

A STUDENT. In these cases, too, Sir, I can understand that slavery to money did harm the man. But I want to know how a man harms himself by harming others.

TEACHER. You can know it when you realise that none of these forms of slavery can grow without a reference to some person or thing constituting one's environment. No slavery could come into being if these relations did not exist. All feelings—good or bad—are the direct product of conditions internal and external. In Nature nothing can appear and nothing can disappear without conditions and the conditions in which human feelings appear and disappear consist of cosmic relations. A person develops various forms of slavery because he is self-seeking and therefore, indifferent to the existence of others. In fact an overplus of regard for "self" makes a man develop such passions as make him feel only for "self". Why does a man develop love for money? Because he wants all the money for himself. In order to achieve such impossible task, he does not care what means he adopts. He becomes dishonest, corrupt, intriguing, false, and cruel to others. This is how he is compelled to harm others. And what does he get? He earns slavery to money and it harms both his body and mind. It also develops in him jealousy which adds fuel to the fire. Because of this jealousy he cannot bear another man earning more money than he does. No doubt he harms others, but it is inevitable for him to harm himself first because he feeds jealousy fat which consigns him to everlasting flames of consuming fire. In the same way, when a man grows slavery to lust, he breaks the homes of others. He breaks also his own home. He destroys the peace of mind of others but he destroys his own peace of mind before he can destroy that of another. He degrades others but thereby he degrades himself too. Besides this, he develops a slavery which ruins his body completely and brings about his premature end. In the same way, in various professions and walks of life,

man tries to trample upon the rights of others in order to rise. *What happens ? He creates lots of hostile conditions which crush him to pieces in the long run. He also develops slavery to position and power which fill his mouth with ashes. The instability of the things of this world brings about a lot of misery to him.* So you can see that all these lower feelings, which move man to harm others, cannot fail to harm him. A corpse has to fester before it can emit nauseating odours. In the same way, a man has to be a slave to degrading forces before he can harm others. As against this, we strengthen the feeling of mercy when we begin to relieve the suffering of others, the feeling of charity when we satisfy the true needs of others, that of generosity when we exercise the spirit of condoning the weakness of others, that of pity when we succour others out of their helplessness. That is why I said that man helps himself by helping others. He develops charity, mercy, sympathy, pity, generosity, etc., because he helps others.

A STUDENT. I have followed, Sir, that there are certain feelings which are harmful to man. I have also understood that all these feelings grow in the cosmic relations of man. But what I want to know is whether there is any law which underlies the proposition which you have enunciated that by harming others we harm ourselves and by building others we build ourselves.

TEACHER. The law behind that truth is the law of evolution. This law is called the law of construction and progress. It is this law which is responsible for the gradual evolution of countless existences in multi-million species that have grown out of unicellular existences. It is due to this law that man has appeared on this earth out of one of the species of apes. It is because of this law that man has gradually triumphed over the entire animal world. It is because of this law that ultimately truth triumphs over untruth and goodness triumphs over evil. It is this law which aims at greater and greater harmony among the four kingdoms of Nature. It is this law which gives one a certainty that ultimately there will be the reign of truth, goodness and beauty in all human and sub-human relations of man.

This process is eternal. It is self-existing. It is unchangeable in its innate nature. All such existences, which want to exist and

progress, *consciously or unconsciously*, must harmonise with this process. Those who fail to attune their hearts to this higher harmony must be wiped off.

Now all those loves and hates of man which lead him to unduly harm the forms and qualities of various existences are called low-loves and low-hates. They are at the bottom of all the bondages or slaveries to various forms of happiness-based lower desires. And all those feelings which lead a man to promote the life, beauty and usefulness of the forms and qualities of various existence are called altruistic feelings. We have seen above how slavery to low-loves and low hates proves a curse to man and altruistic powers prove a blessing to him. I have also tried to show to you that the slavery to low-loves and low-hates grows in man when he seeks pleasure in harming others. Thus to sum up, low loves and low-hates are the root cause of untruth and evil. By developing them we secure the sure means of destroying ourselves and others but by developing altruistic feelings we build others and thereby build ourselves.

A STUDENT. Then, Sir, you mean that freedom from low-hates and low-loves and evolution of altruistic forces constitute a paramount duty of man.

TEACHER. Decidedly yes. It is sad that man is devoid of that light which does show him his inner being or soul and reveals to him how low-loves and low-hates are diseases of the soul and altruistic forces are healthy organs of the soul. When a man gets this light his entire outlook on life changes. He begins to realise that if in gaining the kingdom of the earth and its joys, he develops low-loves and low-hates, he is the greatest bankrupt because he has gambled away the treasures of his soul-life. Once this light pervades the heart of man, he would become very serious about the growth of altruistic feelings in himself. In fact, the true knowledge of the soul and evolution of altruistic powers ought to form the chief pursuit of man and all other pursuits of life should be merely means to that end.

A STUDENT. I have understood, Sir, your viewpoint that altruistic feelings are most essential for man as they promote his life. But are there any other blessings which accrue out of the evolution of the various altruistic feelings in man?

TEACHER. Yes, there are. The chief merit of altruistic feelings

lies in this that they promote a higher life in man and thus prolong his spiritual existence. But besides this primary benefit, altruistic feelings open wide for man the gates of higher happiness, higher achievement and a definitely useful existence. I will talk of them in my next lecture.

## ALTRUISM BRINGS PEACE, HARMONY AND SOLIDARITY

TEACHER. In the last lesson I was asked a question, whether or not there were any other blessings besides the blessings of the higher life, which altruistic forces conferred on us. I am glad to assure you that there are, and that they are a good many. I, however, mention some of them.

These altruistic feelings bring about peace and harmony and solidarity in our domestic and other relations. Let me give you here a few instances. There were four brothers—sons of the same father and the same mother—who grew up in love and affection and esteem for one another. In time, all of them married. After some time their old love and esteem for one another began to abate, and mutual bickerings and disaffections raised their ugly heads instead. The reason was that their wives had no regard or consideration for anybody else except their husbands. They wanted their husbands to think not in terms of the whole family but in terms of their little selves. It was feared that the four brothers would part as enemies. But it so happened that one of them lost his wife and he re-married. This new girl brought back the old peace and old harmony among the brothers. The secret of her power and influence was her altruistic nature. She was the daughter of wealthy parents and she brought as her dowry several trunks full of choicest and costly clothes and jewellery. Woman as a rule is fond of clothes and jewellery. She cannot part with them. Once one of her sisters-in-law was in need of a good *sari* and some jewellery. She knew that she could not expect any help from the other two sisters-in-law since their relations were strained. She, therefore, approached her new sister-in-law. When she asked for the clothes and the jewellery on loan this young girl gave her the keys of her trunks and told her to choose what she pleased. At this rare piece of generosity of the new sister-in-law, she felt simply amazed. But she attributed this generosity to her folly and inexperience rather than to her

innate goodness. But as time passed the whole family came to be convinced that this new girl was really altruistic. The result was that the remaining sisters-in-law and even the brothers and their father developed affection for her. Their own selfishness began to make them feel ashamed.

Once this good girl fell seriously ill. I happened to meet one of her sisters-in-law. She wore the look of depression and gloom. I asked her the reason. She said: "The only angel in our family has suddenly fallen seriously ill. All of us are worried over it, because it was her life and example which had saved our family from being wrecked on the rock of selfishness. My father-in-law is so much upset that he cannot attend to his business and has told the doctor that he would part with half his property if he could save the girl." Such was the influence of this good girl on the whole family. She exercised her influence because she was unselfish. From this you can understand what peace and harmony the life of unselfishness brings in various relations.

I give you another instance of how the life of unselfishness kindled love between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. In India the relations of a daughter-in-law with her mother-in-law and her husband's sister are generally not happy. But here is a case to the point. The daughter-in-law was the wife of the only bread-winner of the family. She used to influence her husband not only to respect his mother but never to make her feel that she enjoyed the second position in the family. This mother-in-law used to live in a town some miles away from the place where her daughter-in-law lived with her husband. The daughter-in-law would regularly send her mother-in-law a decent sum of money which was more than enough to meet her personal needs and the calls of charity. Once the mother-in-law expressed her desire to come to live with her son. The daughter-in-law felt happy. The day she arrived in her son's house the daughter-in-law handed her all the keys of the store and the cash-box and told her: "Mother, you have now to manage the house and we shall take from you whenever we need anything." The mother-in-law had very great regard for her daughter-in-law and she was certain that her daughter-in-law meant what she said. She, therefore, told her, "Daughter! Do manage the house as you have been doing it. Please give me my fixed allowance."



This allowance was quite liberal. Once it so happened that the mother-in-law lost a currency note and so was unhappy. When the daughter-in-law came to know of it, she silently put a note of equal value in her mother-in-law's hand and said with a smile, "Mother, money has to come and go, don't worry for what is lost." Her constant regard for her mother-in-law kept the mother-in-law so happy up to the end that she died blessing her. Similar was the attitude that she maintained towards her husband's sisters and other relations. Her selflessness was a cementing force for the whole family.

I know of a gentleman who is an officer now. When he married he had not passed even the Intermediate. He started his life on a job of Rs. 40. His wife had something of selflessness in her. She at once volunteered to work and to help her husband financially. She was posted on Rs. 60. All through the difficult days, she never made it appear that she was helping him. On the contrary, she made him feel that it was a privilege to serve him. This precious virtue of self-forgetfulness served as the main cause not only of domestic harmony but as an inspiration to her husband to achieve a phenomenal rise in life.

A more touching story than this is of a professor who narrated to me how the unselfishness of his wife had made matters smooth for him. He said, "When I married, I employed two servants because I knew that my wife came from a wealthy family and was educated. I thought that she must be unaccustomed to domestic work. But she had heard of my difficulties. On the next day of our marriage she asked me if I was in debt. I told her that I was. She then asked me to dismiss the servants at once and said that she would cook for me and do all domestic duties. She also asked me to get her a job in some school. She got a post of Rs. 60 in a girls' high school. You will wonder that she not only cooked meals twice a day for my whole family, but even washed the utensils, besides attending to her work at the school. This continued for some years. I am glad to tell you that by her selflessness my family has been saved from a great hardship." I know personally how this good woman became the saviour of her husband's family, when so many women are ruining their families because of their selfish nature.

Similarly, I know how the selflessness of a brother cemented

the bond of union between two brothers. I read in a story book that a father while on his death-bed sent an urgent message to his elder son who was out of station. When he came, the father placed his younger child aged hardly four years in his lap and said to him : "My son, consider this, your younger brother, as your son. I am leaving this world but it shall give me peace of mind if you can assure me that you will give him paternal love, which I shall not be able to bestow on him any longer." The son gave his word. It is an inspiring story to know how this love for his younger brother proved to be one of the strongest motives in his life to make progress and provide his ward with all the amenities of life. He literally worked himself to death to give his brother all that was best in life. The elder brother grew rich and prosperous but he earned all these riches for his younger brother. His selflessness came into prominence in a very trying incident of his life. As he had won the esteem of the public by his high character, a gentleman left his only daughter and her partimony in his charge as the sole trustee. This girl grew up into womanhood and the elder brother fell in love with her. But he often witnessed that his younger brother, who had come of age, and the girl were constantly found together. He inferred from their intimacy that both loved each other. He forgot his own love for the girl and one day took his brother aside and told him : "My dear brother, our father entrusted you to my charge. I have brought you up as well as it was possible for me under the circumstances. I have set apart a very decent sum for you. Since you have fallen in love with my ward, I have come to assure you that nothing will give me greater pleasure than to see you both united in wedlock. And I shall bestow enough money on you both to give you an assured income for your whole life." When the younger brother heard this he said, "My beloved brother, is not one imbecile sufficient in the house ? I know you have done a lot for me. I also know that you can do anything for me but how could you be blind to the fact that it is not me that your ward loves but you ? And let me tell you that it will give me the supreme joy in life if I can die serving you both. This is the least that I can do to pay for the debt of gratitude which you have laid on my weak shoulders." This is

how selflessness of one brother made three souls happy for life.

In the Hindu scriptures, the life of Bhisham Pitamaha is most illustrative of this point. He gave up his kingdom and all his prospects of a married life for the sake of his father. He also lived a long life but spent it in the service of his step-brothers, who had come into possession of the kingdom rightly belonging to him, but which still he served now as the first servant of the State.

We, can, therefore, see that wherever selflessness is found there peace and harmony prevail and the solidarity and strength of mutual ties are established.

A STUDENT. I can see now that selflessness is most essential in every relation of life.

TEACHER. There is another blessing which altruism confers on us. It saves us from all those miseries which slavery to our low-loves and low-hates never fails to bring on our heads.

A STUDENT. We are all anxious to be happy and if you can show which way happiness lies, it shall be only foolish on our part not to make an effort to follow it.

TEACHER. Let me first begin with a story how unselfishness keeps a man free from the worries which cause the greatest wear and tear in our lives. It is related of a king that he was unhappy. His unhappiness reached such an extreme that he suffered from insomnia. He sought one remedy after another but tried to find it everywhere else but in himself. However, he heard that there was a fisherman who was very happy. He immediately sent his minister to bring the shirt of the man. The minister with all his retinue left for the town of the fisherman and found him basking in the sun. The Minister said, "Fisherman, we have heard that you are very happy." The fisherman replied, "Yes, Sir, I am very happy." Upon this the Minister said, "Our king is very unhappy and he wants your shirt to wear, so that he may also become happy." The fisherman replied, "But this is the only shirt that I have." The Minister was astonished and said, "How can you be happy when you have only one shirt?" The fisherman forthwith replied, "I am happy because I have nothing to lose. And your king is unhappy because he has everything to lose."

What the fisherman meant was that a man could be happy

when his selfish desires were not multiple. According to him the root of unhappiness was a clinging desire for the material things of the world.

Similarly, it is recorded of Diogenes—a philosopher, who lived in the reign of Alexander the Great—that he lived in a tub. He thought and believed that a tub was enough for a man to live in and there was no need to live in palaces. Alexander the Great who was not satisfied with the conquest of the known world and had become unhappy because there were no further lands to conquer, was amazed to hear this story of the strange philosopher. Attended by his army officers he went to see him. He was surprised to see Diogenes sitting in a tub. Alexander is reported to have said, “Diogenes, what can I do for you?” The philosopher very pertinently said, “Please move aside. You are shutting out sunshine from me.” It is reported that Alexander said at that time, “Had I not been Alexander, I would be Diogenes.”

Diogenes was not impressed by Alexander’s bigness because he had no desire for the things which Alexander could bestow on him. It is desires that make us cringe and crawl before those who have the power to satisfy them. Diogene also tried to prove that man’s needs were few and by enlarging the scope of his needs man simply got into the meshes of undue attachments, which cause misery.

I hope you can understand that it is selfish desires which cause us a lot of unnecessary worries.

A STUDENT. Should we therefore, Sir, have no desire ?

TEACHER. It is impossible to live without desires. What is needed is that *selfish* desires should not be the controlling motives of our life. They should be subordinate to higher feelings. When selfish desires become supreme commanders of our life they lead us to the various sins and crimes and bring a lot of misery to us.

Let me illustrate this by examples.

There is living in our land a great man who had done great service to the educational cause of our country. He was a deputy collector drawing a very high salary when his higher sense of duty prompted him to share his wealth rather than to amass it. At one time it was difficult for him to make a sacrifice

of money. Had he lived and died in that slavery of mind, he would never have made the right use of money. On the contrary, by becoming its sentinel, he would have earned only worries. When his feeling of sacrifice grew strong he called a public meeting. In that big meeting, he and his wife announced that from that day all that they were possessed of would go to the country's service. He had brought the keys of his house and in the public meeting, he and his wife handed over those keys to the trustees telling them, "From to-day we are no longer masters of all the property that we have owned. All the property that we own now as our personal property are the clothes we are wearing on our person." This scene moved the public very deeply. Years have rolled on and yet that self-sacrificing man is still at the post of his duty of service and, if you ask him, he can tell you that all the worries which eat into the vitals of the worldly men are strangers to him.\*

I give you another and a more illustrative example. There is a doctor who belongs to Delhi. He practised for years and his daily income was usually quite substantial. He told me that if he got less income on any day he would be scorched up and fight with every person, be she his wife or his child. He earned a lot and made a pile. When he came under the influence of our society he changed from a selfish man to an unselfish man. He gave up his practice and devoted his energies to the cause of the public. One day I asked him to tell me from his personal experience the difference between the life of selfishness and the life of altruism. He said, "There can be no comparison between the two lives. A life of selfishness is the life of hell. When I was earning hundreds of rupees a month I was suffering from such an obsession for money that I had lost the peace of my mind. If I got less than the expected amount in any month, I made a bear-garden of my house, growling at all and making their lives miserable. My attitude towards my patients was one of callousness. Now that I have seen the other side of life, I feel the room which served as my dispensary as a prison cell, since it has become associated in my memory with the life of unnecessary misery that I passed through."

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\*These lessons were written in 1939. So all these examples should be read in that context.

He continued: "I serve patients now but I find joy in their joy and pain in their pain. Formerly, it was a sort of madness with me to keep counting my store of money and adding to it. But now I have given away most of my property in charity. The utmost relief and joy that I have found in giving has nothing common with that hellish life of grabbing. I am now one of the happiest of men. Not only are my miseries ended but my very domestic life has been made heavenly. Myself, my wife, my only son, his wife and children, all of us are finding joy in serving one another. I have been cured of all that irritation of mind which was due to a chronic sore of greed and selfishness. I can assure you that the only normal life for a man is the life of service to others. A selfish life is a diseased life."

I have enquired from several persons in my own society who have renounced high jobs and the good things of the world, accepted poverty and taken to the life of service and sacrifice. Everyone of them has assured me that they are far more happy now than they ever were before.

Thus you can see that a life of service and sacrifice or, in one word, a life of selflessness and usefulness saves us from a lot of misery and gives us real happiness and peace of mind.

## ALTRUISM FILLS OUR LIFE WITH DEEP INTEREST

A STUDENT. Sir, we have understood some of the blessings which the life of selflessness confers on man. Are there other blessings as well which an altruistic life has in store for man ?

TEACHER. Yes, there are. The third blessing which this kind of life confers on us is that it saves us from being bored.

Let me give you an illustration. Some time ago, it was published in papers that a multi-millionaire of America committed suicide. He left a letter in which he said that he had tried to get rid of boredom. He had built for himself a steam-boat in which he wandered to distant places to escape from his boredom. As he could not get out of it, he determined to put an end to his life. It was said about him that after he had piled up millions and his ambition was achieved, he found to his dismay that he had nothing further to accomplish. So he had no interest in life. This lack of interest cost him his life. In India it has become almost a tradition that those who retire on pension do not generally live long. Some of them suddenly collapse and die and some drag out a weary and tiresome life. They feel bored. During the tenure of their service they had some work which kept them occupied but as soon as they retired on pension, they died an early death or lived a life of boredom because they had not developed any interest in any hobby.

But those who are busy in some creative work or work of public service get more and more mentally alert and happy as the years roll by. In their case physical disability is the only hindrance in their way. Their mind glows with the vigour of youth and with the joy of optimism.

Several attempts are made even now by some benevolent men to save these persons from this state of boredom. One of my lady relatives had no child. She had an assured bank balance and a house to live in. So far as her daily needs were concerned she had to look to none for help. Financially, therefore, she was not only above want but above worry; yet she showed

signs of boredom. She would pray for an early death. One of her sisters saw with concern this growing dispondency in her. She therefore hit upon a plan. She was blessed with a grand-daughter. As soon as this grand-daughter was born, she took the child and placed it in the arms of her sister, telling her, "From to-day this child is yours." I personally witnessed a new life that began to surge in her veins. She was practically transformed from a despondent soul to one full of love and hope. Before this transformation one could not have guaranteed her even five years of existence. But now this lady found a very strong motive to live and she lived to a very ripe old age not only to see her daughter married but even to see her as mother of two children. This is how her forgetfulness of self in the tiny baby gave her a new interest in life.

Again, I know of a widow aged about thirty-seven lying the live-long day in bed and killing her time either by weeping or sighing or praying for death. I enquired of a lady who knew her, what the trouble with her was. She said that that widow was tired of her life. She was uneducated. She had therefore neither literary interests nor did she possess any feeling for some public service. All attempts, therefore, to divert her mind from despondency failed. There was a wise woman who suggested that by some means this widow should be given some interest in life. She was a very innocent woman. Her life was spotless but she had no motive in life. At the suggestion of that wise woman this widow was persuaded to marry. She married and it transformed her life. To the surprise of all she was seen busy the whole day long. Her husband was very well off. He could afford servants; yet this woman would love to do everything for him. She would pass her time in tidying up the house. She would arrange the room for her husband and keep it extremely neat. In fact she was busy in finding the ways and means to make her husband happy. She forgot herself completely in the service of her husband.

From the above two instances you can see that whenever we learn to forget ourselves in the service of another, we feel a new interest in life and our life is prolonged in the bargain.

In the field of creative work we know the life of Edison, the great scientist. We know how his creative work kept him deeply



interested. This interest sometimes absorbed him so much that he was known to work on in his laboratory for fifty-two hours at a stretch. For years together this love of creative work made him oblivious even to his physical needs. But still he lived to a ripe old age.

A lady married a great man who had given to the world a new theory of education. It is said that she was middle-aged when she married. Her husband lived only for two years after marriage but she had not only married the man; she had married his cause, too. Hence for many many years thereafter she propagated his theory and her life was filled with a wonderful interest. In fact altruism is the only atmosphere in which life begins to fructify into fruits and flowers.

It was in the year 1900 that a young girl aged about twenty was plunged into the night of widowhood. She had two baby boys. But within two short years she lost them both. Her life was, therefore, converting into a desert. All her old interest were dead and there was no possibility of a new interest of similar kind being awakened in her. She was a Hindu widow and therefore was not likely to re-marry. Her father-in-law was plunged into worries as to how she would be able to pass the rest of her life. At last it occurred to him to send her to our Girls' High School with the object of creating in her a feeling of not only receiving education but of serving her sisters. She is alive to-day and though nearly seventy she looks a young, vivacious, and energetic lady. Her appearances belie her age so well that she is easily taken for 50 years old. All this is because she developed a feeling of spending her life in the service of others. She is in charge of a big boarding-house and her busy and devoted life and her solicitous attention to various needs of the girls have not only made her life fruitful but also happy. The surprising thing about her is that she does not charge even an honorarium for her devoted services. The blessings are the only honorarium she seeks. There is not a tinge of boredom in her life.

This selflessness sometimes works wonders. One of the most eminent workers in our society died in the year 1921. Before he died he was bed-ridden for nearly two years suffering from T.B. When he came to realise that there was no hope of recovery, he did not feel in the least downcast. On the contrary he carried

on his wonderful work of ministering to the spiritual needs of hundreds of persons by means of correspondence. He used to say and with a great deal of truth that while confined to bed he was able to turn out much greater amount of altruistic work than he did when he was healthy. Thus love of service of others keeps a man above despair, above lethargy, above depression and above the boredom of life.

George Bernard Shaw, the grand old man of Britain, is past eighty and yet his creative work has kept him so very mentally alert and energetic that he was able to get Nobel Prize at an age when millions are not able to write two lines. His words are still a power in the English literature. He seems to radiate life and why should he not ? It is altruism which is the life of the spirit. Those who possess it in one form or another begin to radiate life all around. They are inspiration to all, even to the depressed.

There is a gentleman of about seventy-five in our society who is my great inspirer. His name is Shriman Bhai Amar Singh ji. Stormy scenes take place, gigantic opposition is launched against our society, persecutions and prosecution are set in motion but this gentleman, like a first class hurricane lamp, is unwavering in his inner light, undimmed in his hope, undaunted in his courage and has a word of cheer, of faith and of hope for every one around. The secret of his life is that he has led a life of service and sacrifice from the age of eighteen. He is full of new ideas and new hopes. His pen is as vigorous as that of any young man. I feel him a power.

In India to day there are three personalities who enjoy international reputation. They are Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore and Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya. They are at the posts of their duty even to-day though physically all the three of them are anything but strong in health. They are still doing their creative and constructive work because they have developed in one form or another, the spirit of altruism. The greatest secret of their power lies in this forgetfulness of self for the mission dear to them. The first is for securing *Swaraj* for our country, the second for giving to the world the wonders of his poetic works and that great institution called Santiniketan, while the third is the father of Banaras Hindu

University. They have an interest in their work which does not diminish but is increasing with years. Their life cannot be a burden to them. They never feel bored.

A STUDENT. We are thankful to you, Sir, for all these inspiring illustrations which clearly prove that altruism gives us an interest in life which the life of slavery to lower desires cannot afford us. But why is it so ?

TEACHER. The scope of lower desires is limited. A man who is limited to hunger for a job has to lose the job when he retires. Thereafter, he has no energy for getting a new job nor power left in him to rise. In majority of cases he is satisfied when he gets pension. Thereafter, he has nothing absorbing to occupy his life. The life of laziness, therefore, becomes a life of boredom. The same is the case with the desire for money. In millions of cases men arrive at a stage when their earning capacity is reduced or they have earned enough and like to retire, but they do not know what to do with the money they have earned. Thus they live a life of worry and boredom. Again, as earning money involves competition and struggle, largest majority of them are not able to carry on the competition. In competition there is resistance and resistance involves friction. The friction causes great wear and tear to life. But you would find millions of men and women in all villages, towns and cities to receive you with open arms if you minister to any of their great needs unselfishly. Hence with time, the demand for such service will become greater and the welcome heartier. Besides this, since an altruistic man finds joy in the joys of others, his joy naturally has no limits. Ordinarily such a person gets also very great encouragement in his work, which keeps alive his flame of interest.

A STUDENT. Sir, but is it not true that the servants of humanity have not unoften been stoned to death or tortured or terribly persecuted ?

TEACHER. Yes, you are right that such incidents have occurred. But it is also true that though an altruistic man is persecuted, he still succeeds in serving the cause. His cause survives and flourishes after his death. His interest is not confined to his individual self. In the glory of his cause, he is ever ready to sacrifice himself. What keeps his flame of love

alive is the conviction that the cause must flourish. He is, therefore, willing to pay the full price for it. It is not unoften that he has a sweet smile while ascending to the gallows. This is because his love has outstripped the confines of his little self and centred itself on the cause. His interest, therefore, continues up to the end of his life. It is also true that the followers of such martyrs to a cause become the chosen people of the generations which follow. It is this fact about altruism which is at the bottom of the freedom from boredom, and is enjoyed by altruistic persons.

## GLORY FOLLOWS THE SERVANTS OF MANKIND LIKE A BOND SLAVE

TEACHER. I have dealt with some blessings which the life of altruism or selflessness confers upon man. To-day I want to deal with one other aspect of the same subject. You know how deeply man is fond of a name.

A STUDENT. Yes, Sir, we know that this is one of the greatest weaknesses in man.

TEACHER. Indeed it is, and you will realise this weakness more fully when I give you some illustrations. A gentleman used to collect subscriptions for some charitable institutions. There was a donor who used to pay some donation annually. The list of the subscribers to these charities was published every year. By mistake it so happened one year that the name of this gentleman did not appear in the list. When he was approached for his usual donation, he wanted to see the list and if his name was there. He did not find it.

He got furious and said, "Why does not my name appear in the list?" He was informed that it was a mistake and a very unfortunate one and he was assured that next time this mistake will be corrected, but he said, "You have forgotten to put my name in the list and I forget this time to pay you my donation." And he refused to pay the donation.

Next year, when he was approached he halved his donation as an expression of disapproval at his name having been excluded from the list once.

There was another gentleman who collected subscriptions for a mission. The editor of the journal of that mission failed to include his name among those who had collected funds for it. It was a sight to see how indignant the man became. He said, "How can we feel encouraged to do any such hard job when our name does not appear in the journal?" He was told that a good act was its own reward and was advised not to worry himself about his name appearing in the journal. But

he said, "I am a human being and not an angel. I want my name mentioned." Such is the weakness of man.

Again, there was a man who wanted to give a large property in charity. The first condition that he laid down was that the institution opened out of his funds shall definitely bear his name and if at any time any chair was established or any other institution was founded, it should also bear his name. He also made it a condition that even if any scholarship was raised out of the funds, it was also to be named after him. Somebody asked him, "Sir, is this charity or barter? Are you giving your property out of love for a good cause or out of love for your name?" He replied, "I am a businessman to the backbone. If I cannot get a good return for the donation that I pay I am a poor hand at my trade. When I am going to give such a large property, surely I want an immortal name for myself." Somebody told him, "Sir, do you know that so far as worldly goods are concerned or worldly pleasures are concerned, they lose the joy of it who seek them and they get the joy of it who forget them. If you have learnt to find satisfaction in a good cause or in a charitable work, you would have got the blessings of a better life as well as a name. Name comes unasked to the true servants of humanity. But those who live for name lose both their better life as well as the name." But all this did not appeal to him. He could not develop the feeling of altruism as that cannot grow in a heart which works for barter. This donor not only lost his property and name but the very chance of a higher life in the bargain.

From these few instances you can realise what a craving man possesses for a name and that this craving is a great enemy of mankind.

A STUDENT. How is it an enemy of mankind, Sir?

TEACHER. I have shown you, before, how man's love for a name rules out the feeling of Altruism. A man who is mastered by the feeling for a name would not like to give even a pie to a deserving cause if he has no chance to broadcast his name. Once we went to a flourishing businessman for some donation for our charitable cause. He came out to meet us and treated us with courtesy. When we told him the purpose of our visit, he very frankly said, "I have given a large amount

in charity and the Government has been pleased to confer a title on me. I am so grateful to the Government. I had to work hard to get this distinction. I am, therefore, not in a position to pay you anything." I asked him, "Was the conferment of title a condition precedent to your giving Rs. 50,000 (the sum he had actually given) to an institution in which the officers were interested?" He said, "Yes, that was the hint thrown out to me and I availed myself of the opportunity. It was very kind of the officer to have helped me to get this distinction." Now, this gentleman would not spare even Rs. 5 for a really charitable cause while he had given away Rs. 50,000 to some institution in which he was not interested beyond getting a title. Now that conditions have changed and British conferred titles are not so much valued as abused, that gentleman must have got a very rude awakening. The title which he had laboured so hard to get has no value in the eyes of the public now. Those, therefore, who hanker after name hanker after shadows.

One day, I went to a graveyard and found faded inscriptions on various tombs. The tombs showed that they were built at great cost and those who loved the dead tried to perpetuate their name. But when they died there was no one left to look after the tombs. The inscriptions were so faded that it was difficult to read them. With time they will disappear altogether and thus the desire to perpetuate their name will bear no fruit. In my own province, one comes across beautiful mausoleums which must have cost a lot to those who raised them over their dear departed ones. I have gone to some of them to find out who the dead were. But there is none to shed the least light. The most pathetic part of the whole affair is that no attempt is made even to repair the buildings and they are silently decaying and crumbling away. What a lesson to those who pine for a name!

And yet this name, for which the world hungers, comes unasked and in a more permanent form to those who lead a life of selflessness.

A STUDENT. How is that, sir? Will you kindly illustrate it?

TEACHER. Once the leading men of Europe and America were asked to name the six greatest men of the world. By a

majority of votes, the six celebrated persons who were named as the greatest men of the world included among them the names of Ashoka and Mahatma Buddha. Ashoka was a king and emperor. History has no end of kings and emperors. Ashoka is recognized as one of the greatest men of the world not because he was a king and emperor, but because he showed a rare freedom from the lust of power. Again, his life was entirely the life of selflessness. He did not live for himself. He lived for others. It is recorded in his life that he never sat down to take his meals as long as he was not satisfied that there was no one in the town who had gone without meals. If on any day he came to know that any of his subjects had gone without food, he would not take his meals. One day he had given away almost everything of the victuals placed before him to the needy and the starving and there was only one apple left for him. When he was about to eat the apple, a man came to his door and said that he was hungry. Mahatma Ashoka gave half of his apple to him. When he was about to take the remaining part, another hungry beggar knocked at his door and he gladly parted with the remaining half and himself went without nourishment. It was this spirit of utter forgetfulness of his self for the sake of others which gave him a permanent place in the hearts of grateful humanity. And as long as man lives, Mahatma Ashoka's name will remain treasured in his heart. This is a permanent name and permanent glory which a life of selflessness earns for man.

A STUDENT. Mahatma Ashoka deserves to be loved and permanently honoured.

TEACHER. Why do you say so? Is it not because he was unselfish?

A STUDENT. Indeed, Sir, I feel respect for him because he felt for others.

TEACHER. That is the key not only to a normal and healthy life of man but also to a higher life and to a higher blessedness. I give you another illustration. Dr. Barnardo's Home is now famous throughout the world. Dr. Barnardo was an ordinary doctor. It was the touch of an infant lying on a footpath, kept there by some unmarried mother, which awakened in his heart the wonderful flame of love and service for



these unwanted children. He forgot himself entirely in this great mission. The chapter of his sufferings in the cause of the unwanted children is heart-rending. Contemporary world is generally unkind to the great servants of humanity. It crucifies its benefactors, banishes them and raises a hurricane of vilification against them by all available means. It begins with the mistrust of its benefactors. Had it not been for the fact that these servants of mankind come with mighty stout hearts, the cause of the service of mankind would have failed ignominiously. The contemporary man finds joy in the persecution of his benefactors. How sad ! Dr. Barnardo was no exception to this rule. He waded through the mire of vilification and scandal but came out unsoiled. The world to-day adores him. More than fifty thousand unwanted children owe their secure home, life, and progress, to the sacrifice of this great man. To-day he has thousands of admirers. So long as this work continues and even thereafter, his memory will be cherished with love and veneration by men everywhere. Dr. Barnardo did not want name. For a long time in his life he was even defamed; but while those who slandered him are lost in oblivion, leaving no trace behind, Dr. Barnardo's name is getting more resplendent as time passes. Glory follows the servants of mankind like bond slave. They get it without caring for it.

A STUDENT. It is surprising, Sir, that glory runs after those who do not live for it but live for some great cause, while it eludes the grasp of those who run after it.

TEACHER. This is but natural. Glory should not be the primary concern of man. If a man lives for a selfish desire to get a name, he will do certain things which are bound to be objectionable. As humanity in the long run judges us by our character and life of sacrifice, it would withhold its admiration from us if we sacrifice our character and life of service at the altar of name. The man who makes name as the end and aim of his life has to prostitute his abilities and to become unscrupulous in order to please those in whose hands, he believes, lies the power to bestow a name on him. Those who live for a name, live for the present and not for the future. They believe that those whose goodwill they win during their life time will never die but will continue to live for ever, otherwise they

would not be so shortsighted as to stake their all on it. When they have done nothing for mankind and lived exclusively for themselves, they have no right to expect gratitude from the coming generations. Since they do not deserve this gratitude, they are easily forgotten and their name naturally sinks into oblivion.

A STUDENT. Sir, we have followed this.

TEACHER. If you have followed me, you would be able to realize that the glory of a name can be secured only by those who live for others.

A STUDENT. Sir, will you please give us some illustrations from the life of any students who have gained a name by service to others.

TEACHER. Once mention was made in red letters of a boy in Europe. He was running a high temperature. All of a sudden a wing of the college caught fire. There was a reservoir of water in the college. The student volunteered to fill the buckets and help in extinguishing the fire. When the Principal went to the reservoir to organize the service, he was amazed to find that sick boy standing knee-deep in water and filling the buckets. The Principal said to the boy : "Why are you here ? Suppose you catch pneumonia!" Upon this boy said: "Sir, if somebody had to be here to attend to this important job, why shouldn't I ?" This bold reply of the selfless boy so deeply touched the Principal that he recorded this incident as a source of inspiration for other boys.

There is another story of a boy which has been preserved for our permanent inspiration. A young boy happened to come to a house which was on fire. In the highest storey of the building there was a room in which a child was sleeping. The mother was rending the atmosphere with her cries: "O, save my child!" Many spectators were there but none could dare go up. The boy asked the spectators to place a ladder by the window of the room in which the child was sleeping. The sightseers tried to dissuade him from taking the risk. But the brave boy not caring for his own self and moved by the cries of the tormented mother, climbed the ladder, entered the room through the window. After some time he was found near the window with the child. A man climbed to give him help. Thus the brave boy saved the life of

the child. This single act of heroism in the service of another immortalized the name of this boy. Humanity has no place in its heart for selfish men, but it cannot afford to forget the names of those who have done some service for the promotion of its welfare in any line, caring for neither name nor glory. Let us therefore remember that the name for which man hungers come unsought and in permanent glory to those who live a life of selflessness in any department of human activity.

## ALTRUISTIC FEELINGS DRIVE AWAY THEIR OPPOSITE EVIL FEELINGS

TEACHER. There is one other blessing which a life of selflessness or altruism confers upon man. I have already told you that many sins and crimes are due to man's selfishness. Every feeling of altruism drives away its opposite feeling. Thus mercy drives away cruelty, generosity supplants greed, reverence displaces vanity, sympathy destroys callousness, etc. These altruistic feelings thereby check in man the desire and tendency to be cruel, to be miserly, to be unsympathetic, etc., and to a great extent prevent the commission of those sins and crimes which flow from selfish forces.

A STUDENT. Will you please illustrate this ?

TEACHER. I was a child of nine or ten when some boys of my school and neighbourhood tried to beat me. Just then one of my friends came and he attacked these boys. Two out of the three ran away and he followed them, while I chased the third boy who had also taken to his heels. I caught hold of him and wanted to beat him. But the boy's face became so pale that I could not touch him. A feeling in me was awakened which stopped my hands from giving a blow. On the contrary, I felt an urge to protect him even in case my friend returned to my help. I told him: "Please go away before my friend comes back." Then I did not know why I had not beaten him. But now I can realize that his pale face awakened mercy in me and the feeling of mercy ruled out the exercise of cruelty.

I give you another instance. One day I was speaking on mercy towards animals. I did not know that a good feeling towards animals was aroused in a boy. He soon left for his village in order to celebrate *Baqar-Id* festival. As usual he was asked to slaughter one animal with his own hands. He used to do it as a matter of course. But this time he could not do it. His father asked him why he was hesitating. He said : "Father, I do not know what has happened to me. But at present it is

impossible for me to slaughter any animal." Here it is the feeling of mercy for animals which made it difficult for him to kill.

It is recorded in the history of Persia (Iran) that a prince was instigated by the enemies of the king, his father, to wage a war against him. His generals defeated his father and made him captive. They crowned the son and placed him on the throne. The trial of his father began. His father was brought in chains and handcuffs before the son who was then on the throne. When the son saw his father a captive before him and in disgrace, his filial love and respect awoke in him. The sight of his father in chains so wounded his heart and shocked him that he at once left his throne, and went to his father, broke his chains, took him by the hand and placed him on the throne. Then he himself stood like a criminal at the bar, waiting his father's orders for the great sin he had committed against him. Here is a case very much illustrative of my position. Had it not been for that noble feeling or filial gratitude and love, he would have sentenced his father to death, as several princes had done before him and several others have done after him. A higher feeling drives away the lower feeling of the opposite kind.

A STUDENT. I am very much impressed, Sir, by the illustrations you have given. I have also experience of some of my classmates who never join us in teasing and molesting others. This is all due to the fact that their sympathy makes the sight of pain in others intolerable for them.

TEACHER. True. My own case also would be to the point here. I hate the idea of teasing others. I was at college. A student got a money-order of Rs. 50. On that very day when he went to his college, he left the money on his bed. Some of the students who were putting up in the same dormitory took the amount and said they would give him a bad time, and compel him to pay them Rs. 5 for a feast. But I could not bear the idea of even one sad moment of worry to that negligent student. I told them plainly that I would not join them and I would go and inform the student as to where his money was. I, however, told them that I would get them something for a feast. Upon this other students grew furious and rebuked me severely, saying: "You are a dog in the manger. Neither you tease the student yourself, nor do you allow us to tease him.

You have destroyed the very fun of our life." But I was firm and informed the negligent student as to where his money was. If all students had sympathy for each other, they would never indulge in such practical jokes.

I remember also an incident of my own mother upon this point. There was a lady who had treated my mother cruelly in my presence. I was a child then and I could not defend my mother. But I hated that woman from the bottom of my heart. One day it so happened that the woman fell into trouble and appealed to my mother for help. My mother at once got ready and went to her help. I had not forgotten the insult she had offered to my mother and hence, in an angry mood, I told my mother that she should let such a bad woman go to hell, who had been so insolent to her. But my mother said: "To do good to one who has done you a good turn is, after all paying a debt. But to do good to one who has done you an evil turn is what distinguishes man from all other creatures. It is impossible for me to remember the evil she had done to me, especially at this time when she is in trouble. I cannot but remove her pain." I can now understand why my mother was so good to that evil woman. Her sympathy impelled her to go to the help of that woman. Indeed, good feelings prove an antidote to the bad feelings.

Let me also give you some illustrations from history. Ashoka is believed to be one of the six greatest men in the past. The story of Ashoka's conversion is not without a lesson for us. On the battlefield of Kalinga, he saw heaps of human bodies dead and decaying. This sight of human misery so deeply smote his heart that he vowed never to go to war. He became the prince of peace and harbinger of the gospel of charity and compassion. How was that made possible? The wonderful feeling of compassion which was lying dormant in his soul came to life. It required the sight of human misery and human slaughter to awaken it. Once awakened in him it put a curb upon the feeling of cruelty. In fact it gradually dried up the spring of cruelty in him and opened wide the fountain of compassion. Thus this one single soul became the harbinger of joy and happiness to millions of homes. But for this altruistic feeling of compassion, he would have lived and died as a conqueror but not as a great

servant of humanity. We can, therefore, see the wonderful glory of the altruistic feeling of compassion.

A STUDENT. Altruistic feelings indeed make a man shine in glory.

TEACHER. Indeed so. Many of you have heard me talk of Dr. Barnado's Homes in England in as my last lesson. Let me repeat it here as it is a telling instance. They are homes for the homeless and a refuge for unwanted children. It is said that neary half a lakh of children have passed out of these homes as young men and women able to maintain themselves. They are among the most remarkable institutions in the world. And yet it was a very small incident which led to the birth of this mighty organization for human welfare. It is said that Dr. Barnado was one night going somewhere when his foot struck against a bundle and the cry of an infant issued from it. He took up the the bundle and to his pain and sorrow he found a human child thrown in a public street by some unmarried mother who considered this baby a child of shame and therefore unwanted. The cry of the baby awakened in Dr. Barnado's heart a potential feeling of mercy which mitigated to a great extent his selfishness which is the mother of many crimes. This feeling grew with time. And it was this feeling which made him fight valiantly against the crime of humanity towards unwanted babies. It was this reservoir of mercy in his heart which overflowed and which fed on its sweet waters hundreds and thousands of unwanted babies. What a glorious thing an altruistic feeling is, and how it arrests and, in some cases, stops for ever the flow of its opposite feelings!

About Mahatma Buddha it is stated that while going through the main bazar, he saw sorrow in humanity as depicted by disease, old age and death. It is said that this sight produced a revolution in his mind. He wanted to rid humanity of this great sorrow. In order to solve this mystery he devoted nearly seven years of his life to contemplation. In order to remove this sorrow and suffering, he dedicated the rest of his life. Disease, old age and death are sights which meet us every day. But in an altruistic soul they produced a wonderful transformation which is not possible in those devoid of these feelings. Those devoid of these feelings, on the contrary, add to human

diseases, human misery, and human death. They find joy in seeing others miserable and find satisfaction in increasing it. This inhumanity of man towards man can never cease so long as he is devoid of altruistic feelings. If we have to arrest it permanently and stop the work of adding fuel to the fire of human misery, we must develop the corresponding altruistic forces which should make the appearance of the opposite feeling impossible.

A STUDENT. This, Sir, is cent per cent true. If we student were to feel for one another, there would be no backward student in the class, because every clever student would find joy in helping a weak one. However, the fact is that not only the sight of a weak student does not awaken sympathy in us but, on the contrary, the sight of a clever student makes us jealous. Several students feel happy if a clever student fails to secure a class. Neither do the clever students feel sympathy in the sorrows of the weak students, nor do the weak students feel pride in the glory of the clever ones. We have not learnt to wish and do well to one another. We have learnt either to be indifferent to the welfare of one another or to wish and do evil to one another.

TEACHER. When such is the case among the youths who are not contaminated by the world, what must be the condition of the worldly-wise who are spending day and night in competition for getting more and more of the goods of the world? The spirit of competition kills in them whatever little of sympathy they may possess. Hence it is not the rise of another which fills them with joy, it is the fall of another which fills them with joy. They are developing inhumanity. But if anyone among them happens to develop an altruistic feeling, he plays a new drama in his life. The great Carnegie, who earned heaps of gold and silver, found joy in distributing that wealth in wonderful charities. It was his belief that a man who did not possess the capacity of giving in charity, had no right to wealth. He believed so because he possessed an altruistic heart. That altruistic feeling made the development of selfishness difficult in him. This altruistic feeling enabled Carnegie to make the highest and most profitable use of his great wealth, while those who were devoid of this feeling found joy in depleting the coffers of others and making them bankrupts in order to enrich their own treasure. **The selfish man lives on the blood and bones of**



others, while a selfless man lives for promoting and prolonging the life and happiness of others. You can thus see what a wonderful blessing an altruistic feeling confers on man.

A STUDENT. Will you kindly deal with some other and homely points as to how altruism prevents sins and crimes?

TEACHER. Let me give you some illustrations on homely points also.

There is a story of a multi-millionaire of Bengal. He was a clerk in a firm. He was sent to Calcutta by his masters to make purchases. When he arrived in the market, he found a bargain which was very tempting but it was a speculation. He vowed in his heart that all gains of the bargain would go to his masters while all the loss would be his. Nobody heard him make this vow. But when the results were declared, he had a clear profit of a very huge sum. His sense of honesty and loyalty made it impossible for him to touch the profits. He, therefore, went back to his masters and kept the huge profits at their feet. It was this clerk who ultimately became the head of that firm. You can, therefore, see how a higher feeling of honesty saves a man from turning mean and dishonest.

There is also another story of a Muslim who was devoted to a Hindu family. The Hindu head of the family tempted that Muslim by offering him a bribe of Rs. 2,000 to kill a young nephew of his. Tempted by money this Muslim took the boy for the purpose of ending his life. But when he reached a forest corner on the bank of a river, this boy asked him: "Grand-uncle (for that was the name by which that Muslim was known in that family) why have you brought me here?" The sound of the word "grand-uncle" stirred the heart of the Muslim and awakened in him the sense of loyalty and love for the youngster who belonged to the family. Tears came down his cheeks and addressing the boy, he said, "My dear son, your grand-uncle to-day is a murderer. Please run as fast as your legs can carry you. Your grand-uncle cannot kill you." From this it is evident how a higher feeling stopped the hand of even a murderer.

There is another story of a brother who had deprived his younger brother of all his patrimony and reduced him to poverty. The poor brother's son one day managed to go to the college where his rich cousin was studying. Both cousins had

never seen each other before, as the poor brother had, in disgust and helplessness, gone to a very distant place for his livelihood. It was, thus, by an accident that the rich cousin came to know his poor relation. He also came to know how his father had defrauded the poor boy's father. Unfortunately the poor boy got seriously ill and died. His rich cousin found out that his father had come to the patrimony by suppressing the original will. He had a just heart. His feeling of justice was awakened, and without informing his father, he took the original will and left it at the door of his poor uncle so that by means of it he might recover the money from his father. You can see how the sense of justice made the boy forego the large inheritance which was ultimately to come to him.

These few instances can show you how higher feelings help to make a man behave honourably, justly, loyally and honestly towards others. What is therefore, needed is the cultivation of the higher feelings. It is sad that the attention of mankind is not directed to this all-important subject. Men are anxious to solve the problem of humanity by education, by social adjustments, towards political policies and by economic planning. They forget that it is man who has gone wrong and, therefore it is man who is to be righted. The present position of man is this: He is terribly ego-centric. He is not at all cosmo-centric. He looks at the world through the eye-glasses of ego. He, therefore, produces a lot of misery. If he does not develop altruism, all these external remedies would not help to solve the real problem of mankind, i.e., to make man friend of man and not his enemy as he at present is.

It is deeply to be regretted that we rarely find men who could appreciate the work of cultivation of altruism which is being done in this world. When the appreciation is absent, it is idle to expect from them enthusiastic co-operation in this noble work.

Remember, boys, that the future of mankind lies in the hands of those who are themselves altruistic and who are busy developing altruism among others. At present, they may be suspected, abused, persecuted and even hounded down, but the time is not far when their services will be appreciated and the humanity shall recognize them with gratitude and extend to them their enthusiastic support.

## ALTRUISTIC PERSON IS MOST HAPPILY PLACED

TEACHER. An altruistic man is the most happily placed individual in the world. He associates himself with a cause which is bound to succeed. He is, therefore, with the victorious cause in Nature. Now, boys, tell me who is there who does not want to be on the side of victory ?

A STUDENT. Sir, every one of us wants to be on the victorious side. Failure has nothing to be proud of. If failure leads to victory as a link in the chain, it has some value, but this value, too, it gets because it ultimately leads to victory. No human being would like to fail.

TEACHER. This is true. But though it is a fact that everybody wants to live a long life, a majority of men die before their time. Thus in spite of the fact that everybody wants to be on the side of victory, an overwhelming majority of men associate with causes which bring them, not unoften, disgrace, generally unnecessary worries, most avoidable misery, and always waste of energy and failure.

A STUDENT. How is that, Sir ? Will you kindly explain and illustrate your point ?

TEACHER. Yes, there are lots of cases which illustrate this. First, let us consider how many men there are whose names are treasured in the annals of human history? Millions, billions and trillions of human beings have lived and died, and yet in every continent you will find that the men who have left an indelible mark on time can be counted on one's finger-ends. Why is it so ? It is so because they associated themselves with causes which bore the hall-marks of failure. Now, if a man lives and dies for himself, what is there to remember about him ? To the world he lives and dies as if he had never been born. Worse than that, there are multi-millions who live on the blood and bones of others. They rob others of their rights and happiness heartlessly. Therefore, an anguished sigh rises from oppressed

humanity that they may be rid of such parasites as soon as possible.

It is recorded in history that during the acme of Muslim rule, the *Qazis*, as a rule, were most unpopular because they were tyrants. The result was that when a *Qazi's* dog died, the whole world accompanied the bier, but when the *Qazi* himself died, not even a dog accompanied his bier. As long as he was alive, men tried to please him, because they knew that he would otherwise ruin them. But when he died, people lost all fear of him and therefore showed their utter want of respect for him by not attending his funeral. How unfortunate these *Qazis* were ! If they are remembered, it is with a curse, and as an abject lesson to those who are cruel. Leaving these two kinds of people who form the largest bulk of mankind, there are those unfortunate people who associate themselves with sinful causes. What a shame and disgrace they have earned for themselves on that account ! Look at India. There was an evil custom called *Sati*. Widows were burnt alive. Countless generations supported this monstrous custom. A lonely but gifted soul in the person of Raja Ram Mohun Roy took up the cudgels against this savagery. He was single-handed and there were millions among orthodox Hindus who arrayed themselves against him. But he was born with an altruistic force of sympathy for the widows. He wrote, he preached, he organized; he approached the Government and the result was that this solitary man ultimately won a victory over millions of his opponents. This was not because Raja Ram Mohun Roy was a sovereign emperor or the greatest general of the world. In fact, the worldly resources at his disposal were insignificant compared to the resources at the disposal of his opponents, and yet he won victory and a beloved name in the temple of glory. Now, tell me boys, why did he prove a victor in the long run ?

A STUDENT. Sir, it is because he espoused a noble cause.

TEACHER. What do you mean by a noble cause ?

A STUDENT. We call that a noble cause which has for its aim and object the real welfare of mankind in any department of life.

TEACHER. Now that I have given you an example, can any one of you quote me some example from the pages of history ?

A STUDENT. Sir, I remember one. I recently read the life of Abraham Lincoln, one of the greatest Presidents of America. He felt very much for the slaves. He hated slavery. He could not bear even the idea of millions of his fellow men being treated and sold like cattle. In his diary he had put it thus: "I have made a vow with my God that slaves shall be free and I will see that they are free." In order to achieve this end he had to face the military opposition of the whole of the well-equipped and rich South. He had thus to have recourse to war in this great cause of emancipation. By love and by war, he ultimately brought the whole of America to declare and make the slaves free. Abraham Lincoln was virulently attacked in the Press, persecuted and cursed by his opponents, left in the lurch by his friends and betrayed by his followers. He was warned that he was taking the most hazardous step. Even the Church was not with him. In fact, all secular and religious forces seemed at one time arrayed against him. But his altruism lit in him the fire and infused the courage and heroism of a conqueror. In fact, one altruistic feeling gave him enough power to stand against millions. Ultimately he won.

TEACHER. You can, therefore, see what a glorious thing it is to have an altruistic feeling. It gives one the courage of millions, the fire of countless millions, the enthusiasm that seldom dies and the faith that is rarely dimmed. After all, what can give one the highest privilege of being a man? Nothing but altruistic feelings. When altruism confers these rare privileges on us, how foolish it is not to awaken to the need of developing them in ourselves? And, young friends, you perhaps remember how two or three years ago, votes were taken to find out the six greatest men of the world in the past. Abraham Lincoln, by a majority of votes, was declared one of those six. Jesus Christ, Mahatma Buddha, and Mahatma Ashoka were included in that list. You can, therefore, see what a high position the grateful humanity has given to Abraham Lincoln because of his altruistic achievements. Can anybody else give me an example of any other moral victor?

A STUDENT. Sir, for the last several centuries the widows in India have been the most oppressed section of Hindu public. Generation after generation had not only become reconciled to

the perpetuation of this oppression on widows but had even become active adherents and supporters of that tyranny. Mahatma Vidya Sagar in Bengal boldly took up their cause. He was then single and un-aided. The opposition to his advocacy of that cause was simply appalling. These opponents of his carried on a hurricane of persecution against him. But though single and un-aided, the cause that he espoused was just and the feeling that fired his soul to stand by the cause at any cost, was an altruistic feeling. His feeling was noble and the cause that he espoused was noble. The result was that he made so many breaches in the citadel of orthodoxy that ultimately his opponents had to eat the humble pie.

TEACHER. So you can see that an altruistic man, though a single individual, is mightier than the mighty. His altruistic feeling is, or proves in fact, a guarantee of his success. As the cause that the altruistic man espouses is mainly and exclusively intended for the welfare of mankind, it carries the impress of sure victory. You have heard about Socrates. The judges pronounced their verdict that he was guilty of corrupting the youth and sentenced him to death by poisoning. No doubt they killed him but did they kill his cause? Humanity to-day hangs down its head in shame that the people of those days—their ancestors—could commit a crime of such a dark character, and against such a marvellous benefactor of mankind. Though evil persecutions can kill a noble man, they cannot kill his cause. In their foolishness they may heap disgrace on his head but, ultimately, it is they on whose head the disgrace recoils a thousand-fold. Galileo had to end his life in prison as a victim of inquisition. He was a great servant of mankind. He had associated himself with a noble cause of true knowledge. Orthodoxy heaped coals of fire on him. They disgraced him. They treated him as a common criminal. But to-day Galileo is loved and honoured as a great scientist and servant of humanity. The truth that he espoused has triumphed. Galileo has become a conqueror but those who killed him by their cruelty are to-day denounced as the foes of mankind. The disgrace they heaped on Galileo has recoiled on to their heads with a thousand-fold force. With these few illustrations, I want to carry to you the conviction that even if an altruistic man or even a

seeker after true knowledge is physically killed by his contemporaries, he does not die. He and his cause get eternal life. They harvest all the honour and their enemies reap all the dishonour and disgrace.

A STUDENT. Sir, it is very elevating to hear that even if an altruistic man or a seeker after true knowledge dies a premature death at the hands of his opponents, he and his cause survive and gain an eternal name. But though facts illustrate this truth, will you tell us the law behind this great truth?

TEACHER. Certainly. You know that we all are parts of Nature and subject to its processes of evolution and devolution. The only process which bids for life, construction, progress and growth is called the process of evolution. It is this process which ensures the victory of truth over untruth and goodness over evil. In fact, if devolution had triumphed in the long run, Nature itself would have ceased to exist. But existence, growth and development alone can ultimately flourish. Those, therefore, who associate themselves with the cause which removes untruth or evil and establishes any truth or any goodness, cannot but flourish. By associating with such a cause they associate with the deathless process of evolution. They cannot but succeed in their cause. What is, therefore, needed is a faith born of experience that since the process of evolution is the only cause of progress, those who want to live must harmonize with it or they will be wiped off the face of the earth.

A STUDENT. Is there any other law beyond this?

TEACHER. Yes, there is yet another law besides this. Humanity as a whole cannot commit suicide. Humanity cannot honour or even tolerate those who array themselves against their common good. For, by honouring and tolerating them humanity will be proving that it loves to commit suicide. This is the reason why humanity ultimately honours those who promote its welfare. Naturally, humanity is grateful but only to those who have served its interests and not to those who have injured them.

The altruistic persons are those who promote the interest and welfare of mankind. The selfish persons are those who

cannot but harm the interest of others. Let individuals look howsoever much to their own selfish interests, yet humanity has no place for them in its heart. This is the reason why humanity cherishes the memory of those who serve it and zealously preserves in the temple of glory, the names of those who have been the outstanding personalities in doing good to it. So long as humanity is what it is, the only persons whom it will love, cherish and honour, must be altruistic persons and only such causes can triumph in it as are intended in the highest degree to promote the interest and welfare of mankind. These are the two facts or laws which are behind the truth that ultimate defeat, disgrace and shame become the lot of the evil and the selfish. How extremely necessary, therefore, it is for every man to give up the path of evil and selfishness and walk the path of higher evolution and altruistic life!



## THE HIGHER PERSONAL INFLUENCES

A STUDENT. Sir, after hearing all that you have said about the need and importance of life of altruism, we are very much impressed in its favour. But does it lie in our power to develop that life whenever we wish to do so?

TEACHER. In order to understand that point there are some preliminary principles which you have to take into consideration. In the first place, you have to realize that our entire life is law-bound. The world is not governed by our wishes, but it is governed by its own immutable processes called laws. Even our wishes are subject to law.

A STUDENT. Sir, how are our wishes subject to law?

TEACHER. Your wishes correspond to your inner needs or desire-forces. A man who is fond of meat-eating will never wish to give it up so long as that liking of his rules him. A man who is fond of bribes-taking will never wish to become honest so long as his passion for it dominates him. A man who is fond of hunting will not even tolerate any suggestion for giving it up so long as his love for hunting rules him. A man fond of self-praise will never bear an unpleasant truth if it offends against his love of self-praise and so on and so forth. In fact, love for anything produces repulsion for its opposite. How can therefore, one wish or act against his loves? This is the reason why sin prevails in the world. Even physical punishment does not, in the majority of cases, produce any wish in the punished to change for the better.

A STUDENT. Sir, this is indeed a very sad plight of man. But will you please illustrate this ?

TEACHER. There was a boy who was a rich man's son. His father had left him a large property. He was not educated. A very pious man was moved by his feeling of sympathy to give him free tuition. His object was to educate and open a new world of knowledge to him, so that the boy may be better able to manage his own affairs. The boy agreed and a time was

fixed for teaching. The boy came to him for a week or so and then discontinued his visits. The pious man again persuaded him to re-start his studies. Once or twice the boy made an attempt but ultimately gave it up in disgust, telling the pious man : 'Please, Sir, don't worry me any further. What have I to do with education ? What is after all the ultimate object of education ? Even after graduating, man hungers for service. Money is after all the be-all and end-all of everybody. I have enough of it. I tell you honestly, I have become so much disgusted with education that your very presence is unwelcome to me.' Indeed the pious man remained silent. That boy never got education in his life. Could you ever expect this boy to long for education ?

A STUDENT. No, Sir.

TEACHER. In various schools and colleges a majority of the students do not like Mathematics, Philosophy or Physics, etc. Would you expect them to become brilliant in these subjects or even take them up as their elective subjects ?

A STUDENT. But, in spite of this want of attraction for the subjects, there are students who take them and have even passed.

TEACHER. Yes. They never do so for the love of that. They do so as an unavoidable necessary evil which must be faced. I give you an illustration. There was a man who passed his M.A. The first thing that he did on the day after completion of his examination was to place all his books on the ground and arrange them in rows. He took up a shoe and went on striking every book saying: "You devil, you have made my entire life miserable. I have now done with you. I don't want to see your face again." This process he repeated with every book. Now, here is a man who completed his education with the degree of M.A. Do you expect this man ever to study the books on Mathematics with any relish ? People do several things out of a cruel necessity which they internally abhor. I myself never liked Persian and yet I had to continue Persian right up to B.A., since it was a compulsory subject. When I passed my B.A. examination, the one thing that relieved me most was that I was rid of this unpleasant subject. I never wished thereafter

to study this subject and I have never studied it. It is unnatural to expect from us to wish for anything which is painful to our very nature.

A STUDENT. Sir, is this true in the moral world, too ?

TEACHER. Yes, it is as true in the moral world as it is in the intellectual world. I know of a definite case of a man who was addicted to adultery. His passion for extramarital sex indulgence was so abnormally morbid that he would find life impossible without it. He had a very good wife and a beautiful child. He would sometimes feel that he was ruining the whole family. Yet he would not give it up. A worker of the Dev Samaj felt pity for him and began to feed his higher nature. The higher influences produced a temporary change in him for the better, and for a while, he kept loyal to his wife. But after some months his old nature re-asserted itself and he bluntly said, "It is useless to work on me. I have no desire or power left to resist this appetite." Saying so, he cut himself off from the society and plunged headlong into this whirlpool of evil. Can you expect such a man to wish or to will to become good ?

A STUDENT. This is a strange case, Sir.

TEACHER. It appears a strange case to you. Those who work in the field of moral reclamation often meet with such imbecility. I know of another case of a man who gave up bribes-taking in my company. After some time he came and asked me, "Sir, what am I to get in life after death by being honest ?" I told him: "Sardar Sahib, you need not wait for the next world, you become honest. The virtue of honesty is in itself a wonderful reward." The man said, "Is that all ? Then, there is no need at all for becoming honest !" Here was a man who thought honesty was worth something if it could bring in more money but in itself it was worth nothing. He became a notorious bribes-taker. Do you expect he could have a wish or will to become honest ? In fact, a man cannot desire for what is painful to his in-born or acquired nature. Sometimes the love for the lower things is so strong in man that he cannot attempt anything against it even when he knows he can prolong his life only by such a course. There was an Inspector of Police who was given to drinking. Gradually, this habit got the better of him so dangerously that he would substitute drinks

even in place of water and milk. So he became seriously ill. The doctor pronounced that he would die if he did not take a substantial quantity of milk. The Inspector said: "Please, Doctor, suggest something else. It is impossible for me to take anything except drinks." The doctor told him bluntly, "Then, Sir, your days are numbered". The Inspector, smiling, said, "Sir, the days of all of us are numbered. The period of our stay on this earth is already determined. When this is so, why should I not drink and derive as much happiness from life as possible? It is drink that gives me the highest joy. Why should I deprive myself of that solid fact of joy for a myth that it lies in our hands to prolong my life?" One night this Inspector was found dead in his bed, due to over-drinking. He even quoted scriptures in defence of his deadly habit! He assumed the role of a philosopher and fatalist in order to serve his unnatural craving for drinks.

I cannot forget the most pathetic case of another drunkard. This happened about forty years ago. A village Headmaster got Rs. 30 p.m. He had a wife and three children. This unfortunate drunkard used to spend all his thirty rupees of pay in drinking. In those days a Headmaster's wife was considered a queen of the village. And yet this drunkard's wife finding no other means of maintenance appealed to the villagers to give her menial work to maintain the children. Hours would she spend in grinding corn. This is how she maintained her drunkard husband and his children. I found the children in rags and the woman in tattered clothes, but I found this Headmaster unaffected by this terrible condition of his wife and children. Can such a man wish to be free from this habit? That is why we find dishonesty prevalent on the largest scale. That is why we find sexual impurity in an epidemic form. That is why we find so many crimes rampant in the world. That is why we find so much mistrust of man in man in the various departments of life. If it lay in the hands of man to become good when he pleased and to do good when he chose, this world would have presented a thousand times better sight than what meets our eyes at every corner. In fact, there is enough and to spare of important mental willingness to become good and to become true as against the potency of evil desires of the heart. There is enough

of passion and greed in man for money, to get rich, to possess property, to gain power, to secure position, to conquer kingdoms, to acquire name and fame, to have family and children, etc. etc. In order to gratify these desires man sacrifices everything. If he can get them by truthfulness, he will speak the truth; if he can get them by falsehood, he will use falsehood. If he can get them by fair dealings, he will use fair means; if he can get them by under-hand dealings, he will have no scruples in embracing them. But as his experience has taught him, he believes falsehood and crooked dealings to be far more paying than truth and fair dealings. Hence as a rule he has recourse to untruth and evil. This is the reason why so much mistrust prevails among the people in domestic, social, communal, national and international relations.

A STUDENT. How is this state of things going to change. Sir ?

TEACHER. That is the very question which I have to reply to-day. In order that a man may change, we should provide him with a higher atmosphere. Let me explain this to you. Once a man narrated his experience. He said that he had gone to a distant place and was lodged by his host in some building. In one of the rooms of this building he had a weird experience. Whenever he entered the room he felt an urge to kill somebody. As soon as he came out of the room, the urge was gone. He enquired of the people around, why, he felt like that. After some days he came to know that a murder had taken place in that room and the murderer used to live in that room. The murderer had been hanged but the atmosphere charged with his murderous impulses remained there long after he had died. This is called lower atmosphere. I myself know of a great soul exclaiming on entering a room: "This room must have been very recently inhabited by some dirty souls. The atmosphere is choking." On enquiry it was found that some drunkards and debauches had put up in that room and by their evil life, left the atmosphere charged with their wickedness. Once a great man had a strange experience. A blanket was purchased for him from a Pathan. As soon as he used it at night, he felt an uncomfortable sensation. He had to cast off the blanket. The man who had worn it had charged it with his emanations.

Therefore, the blanket carried those influences. It is these influences which are called atmosphere. Even the inanimate objects are charged with such influences as affect sensitive persons.

A STUDENT. Sir, this piece of knowledge is surprisingly new. Are we to believe that all clothes and other materials of the house, the rooms and verandahs of the house, the village or the town retain influences of various kinds and affect human beings accordingly?

TEACHER. That they do. There are some districts whose people are notorious for blood feuds. There are other districts which are famous for a peaceful life. This is because the atmosphere created in both the places is of a different character.

A STUDENT. Who creates the atmosphere?

TEACHER. The higher or lower atmosphere is created by moral or immoral men. The cumulative effect of the emanations of men is called an atmosphere. Once a man related his own experiences. He had gone to a big town. Without knowing it, he happened to pass through a bazar which was reserved for prostitutes. He felt very uncomfortable. So he ran through the bazar. He said that he actually felt as if he had become dirty. When he came back, he sat under a tap and had a heavy bath with all his clothes on. He then went to his room and had a religious exercise. And it was after all that, that he felt normal.

This moral atmosphere is carried even by individuals. Their very personality has a strange experience for other people. There was a young man who told me that whenever he saw a certain very pious girl, he felt ashamed of his inglorious past. He felt inclined to slap himself for the wrongs he had done to womankind. There was another good man, now dead, who was a worker of the Dev Samaj. About him it is said that his personality was so effective that whenever he passed by those who knew him, they used to feel inclined to think of higher things. Whenever I came into his presence, I always felt a great impulse to give up my practice and devote myself to the cause of the welfare of mankind. His very presence used to shake me out of the worldly life. I was then living as an advocate. There were several non-Dev Samajists who were attracted towards him and

who used to feel the same urge. There were many who felt it a privilege to pass even a few minutes in his room. Many acknowledged that they returned better men than when they had entered the room. His personality charged those that met him with a wonderful impulse to become better and noble. All this is called personal magnetism. In fact, it is personal atmosphere. It is a kind of aura which every man carries about himself. It is also called a halo. This halo corresponds with the inner life of the man.

Once some bad people raised a storm of persecution against a good man. This good man invited them to discuss matters with him. They came and they saw him. They were conquered and they could say nothing against him. When they left his room, they were angry with themselves that they should have been conquered. They again carried on their hostile propaganda. The good man again sent them word asking them to meet him. They refused, saying, "He is a magician. As soon as we stand in his presence we feel that we are wicked to persecute him. We feel inclined to give up the fight and even to touch his feet in reverence. But when we come out of his room, we begin to feel that we are in the right. Hence we are determined to avoid him." The messenger told them, "Is it fair on your part? If you have a real grievance, why should it evaporate in his presence?" But they smiled and remained silent. Such is the influence of goodness even on antagonistic souls. In order, therefore, that a man should have a change for the better in his inner life, he should live in a higher atmosphere. Those whose inner life is changed for the better constitute in their turn a higher atmosphere for the less fortunate. The highest atmosphere that can be provided for all weak and erring human souls is the atmosphere of the highest and noblest soul—a soul whose entire life is enriched with complete love for truth and goodness and who should not only be incapable of wishing evil and doing evil to others but who should be so constituted as to do good and wish good even to those who persecute him the most. In fact, such a soul could be the only fountain of all love for the highest good of mankind and his atmosphere would destroy every lower urge towards untruth and evil and develop every higher urge towards truth and goodness in all

those who came in contact with him. Such a soul would be a saviour of mankind. He would save man from his low loves and low hates. Such a soul would be the all-sided evolver of man, because he would develop altruism in all fit souls. Therefore the first condition of every human soul who wants to become altruistic is to seek the protection of this unique soul. We believe our most worshipful Guru, Bhagwan Devatma, to be such a unique soul who has wrought miraculous higher changes in the lives of persons by his unique higher influences.

Besides this personal atmosphere, there is also the social atmosphere. There are social atmospheres which develop evil or selfish life in man. There are very few social atmospheres which develop the life of even an ordinary gentleman. Any social atmosphere which can provide suitable conditions for the growth of a selfless life, is a higher social atmosphere and such an atmosphere can be created by altruistic souls. I shall deal with this in my next lecture.



## THE HIGHER SOCIAL ATMOSPHERE

TEACHER. To-day I want to talk to you on the necessity of a higher social atmosphere or environments. Social atmosphere, of whatever kind it may be, exercises tremendous influence on us for good or for evil. In fact, the most overwhelming majority of men are what this social atmosphere makes them to be.

A STUDENT. How is that, Sir ? Will you please illustrate your point ?

TEACHER. Just look at our Indian atmosphere. From the time of Mahabharata to the time of Lord William Bentinck, our society encouraged burning of widows on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands. Millions of women, or we may say countless millions of them, were sacrificed at the altar of this monster of social pressure. Most of the women felt it a pride to accept this martyrdom. Even now there are lots of women who sigh for the revival of that abominable custom. This is how social atmosphere affects our ideals and destinies. Again, for certain reasons a sort of social opinion grew up in our country that marriage of a girl before puberty was a pious act. Millions of our children grew up in that atmosphere and believed that such a thing was morally and spiritually beneficial. Even to-day there are millions of our countrymen who believe child-marriage to be a good thing and marriages of mature people a misfortune. It is not known how long the minds moulded by this centuries-old social atmosphere would take to free themselves from the obsession of that idea. Again, for centuries our society considered the marriage of a widow to be a reprehensible thing. Millions grew up in that social atmosphere and believe that widow-re-marriage was morally and spiritually an indefensible act. Those who grew up in this social atmosphere persecuted the reformers the most. Even widows themselves, in whose interests the reformers were fighting,

opposed them. They thought that the reformers were a set of insane people who were out to wreck a most healthy institution. It is surprising that even the absconding of thousands of widows with bad characters did not open their eyes. Such is the deadening influence of social atmosphere for evil.

A STUDENT. No doubt social atmosphere influences our attitude towards various customs, but does it also influence our minds ?

TEACHER. The atmosphere in which one is born and brought up influences both his head and his heart. A man born in a Muslim home unconsciously accepts all the Muslim beliefs about cosmology, the origin of man and various religious beliefs and ideals. A child born in a Hindu home accepts Hindu philosophic thoughts on all the above points without any question. In a Santanist home a child believes in the kind of mythology which is prevalent there. Those brought up in a certain social atmosphere resent ideas and ideals foreign to their own atmosphere. There are billions of people who think that all natural phenomena like rain, hailstorm, earthquake, dust-storm, volcanic eruption and all kinds of epidemics are visitations from on high. They are taught in schools and colleges the scientific explanation of these phenomena but in spite of that they prefer to live and die with the beliefs inherited by them from their social atmosphere. Even a sage like Mahatma Gandhi openly declared that the earthquake in Bihar was sent by God as a visitation for our wrong attitude towards the untouchables.

It is sometimes difficult for even the best minds to shake off the chains laid on them by social atmosphere in their cradle. It is only when the social atmosphere becomes surcharged with scientific truths that men think of accepting them exactly as they accepted unscientific ideas from their environments. All our prejudices, all our biases, all our ideals are in the largest majority of cases the heritage which we receive from our environments, or social atmosphere.

A STUDENT. Will you kindly show us, by illustrations, how different social atmospheres affect persons differently ?

TEACHER. Once I had a class of four girls—two Hindu and two Muslim. I narrated to them the story of a Hindu girl, who

had been betrothed to a graduate but the boy had changed his mind and the engagement had come to an end. The girl's father informed her of the changed circumstances and asked her consent to get her betrothed somewhere else. The girl thereupon told her father humbly and firmly : "Dear father, so far as I am concerned, I have made up my mind. I am his wife whether he agrees to marry me or not. You may, therefore, consider me to be a married girl. You need not in any way worry your mind about me." I invited the opinion of the class. The two Hindu girls said : "She did the only right thing possible under the circumstances. Once we are betrothed we become brides. We commend her step." But the Muslim girls said : "She was utterly foolish. After all, it was nothing but a betrothal. It was not a marriage. It is sheer madness on the part of the girl to sacrifice her life for such a worthless boy." I do not discuss here the rightness or wrongness of their views. All that I want you to understand from this instance is, how social atmosphere affects individuals differently.

There was a Pathan family in a village in the neighbourhood of my town. These Pathans had a community of their own. Among them a very strange custom had developed. If a girl lost her husband when she was only betrothed, she could not marry. One of the boys of that community was studying in a high school. He was betrothed. He died when he was schooling. His betrothed never married. Such is the strength of social environment. Her religion allowed her to marry but her social atmosphere opposed it. And moulded as she was in that environment, she herself considered her marriage to be wrong.

A STUDENT. How do social environments affect our morals?

TEACHER. They affect our morals tremendously. Just look at the crime of taking bribes. It is almost a universal practice among the clerks and Babus and even among highly placed men to commit or condone bribes-taking. Even in high society those who offer their girls to any employed person invariably ask if the man has a source of income besides his salary. This source of income is, in general, nothing but immoral. And when they come to know that a man has got a very good source of this kind of income, he is accepted as a very good match. If he builds

bungalows with ill-gotten money, he is not looked down upon. He is praised. If he purchases lands, jewellery, etc., with these ill-gotten means, he is applauded as a very sensible man. The best offers are made for his boys and girls. If out of these ill-gotten means, he subscribes something in charity, he is eulogized as a philanthropist. If he digs a well, builds a *sarai* or *musafirkhana*, opens a school or founds a hospital, his name is even immortalized. Nobody, as a rule, questions the source of his income. Nobody dares call him dishonest. In Council Chambers and on various committees, he is offered a high place. Not unoften a title is conferred on him. Now, when such is the social environment, how can we expect majority of men or even a reasonable proportion of them to become honest? Among merchants also, the man who can fleece most money from his customers is considered the best business-man. No thought is given to honesty and fair dealings. All credit is given to one for making more money. Can such an environment encourage the spirit of fair dealing? It cannot and it does not. This is how social atmosphere affects our morals.

When I was practising as a lawyer, a very strange case came to my notice. A man had come and engaged me. He took me to his house to show me the scene of offence. It was a very neatly kept house and the women observed *pardah*. I thought very naturally that the man must be a high class Brahmin. But to my utter amazement, my clerk told me that this client of mine belonged to the class of *Kanjars* (i.e., those who follow the profession of prostitution). I could not believe it. I said, "My man, how can that be true when his ladies covered their faces from us, when we entered his house to see the scene of the offence?" The clerk said, "Sir, these people are particular about the honour of their wives but they keep their daughters in brothels and through them they follow the profession." I sent for my client and enquired of him if the statement given to me was correct. My client said, "Sir, it is true that we keep our daughters in brothels. This is the custom that prevails in the whole of our community. We have educated men in our community, who hold good government jobs and they have to follow this custom. We would be boycotted if we refused to follow the custom. We would

commit a murder if anybody assaults the honour of our wives but we serve as procurers for our daughters." I then asked him, "Don't you feel any prick of conscience when you let your daughters follow this profession?" He said, "In this respect we feel nothing." Such is the deadening influence of evil social atmosphere.

When I graduated, I worked as a teacher for some time. A boy was studying in the ninth class whose father's name was recorded in our registers as Adam. I was told that he was the son of a prostitute and the boy's father was a European visitor of the prostitute. The boy was very tall and handsome. I called him to my room and asked him if it was a fact that his mother was a prostitute. He said, "Yes." I then asked him, "Do you feel no pang when others visit your mother?" He said, "Sir, this is the profession ordained by God for my mother. And what God has ordained cannot be bad." Such is the mental and moral condition which the boy developed in that atmosphere.

A STUDENT. Sir, what is the general atmosphere of the world's social system?

TEACHER. I would read to you to-day from *The Modern Review* some paragraphs about the condition of modern society given by a great writer. He says: "In all civilized countries recruitment to public services is regulated by certain principles. There are tests everywhere, though they are not the same. Yet, after all, they are always tests of intelligence and not of character. We have devised intelligence tests, but have we any system of character-testing? In politics the conflict between mere goodness and worldly bigness is rampant. A mere good man has little chance there.

"In modern life money yields tremendous advantages. And it is an uncanny truth that the God of Money prefers soiled hands to hands un-soiled. Honesty is not always even the best policy. In trade and commerce and in the professions a type of honesty undoubtedly prevails. To a large extent that type of honesty is the best policy. But, in the first place, it is only a policy and secondly even this is always not so. In the third place, it is commercial and professional honesty and not honesty itself or general honesty.

"In the struggle for existence, which undoubtedly there is, which is daily being accentuated by the force of civilization, the

typical good man—the scrupulous, the honest and strictly virtuous man—the conscientious, considerate and selfless man is always at a disadvantage. It is always well nigh impossible to lead him to the top. It is difficult to bring success to him. In politics this is perilously true; and it is not untrue in other walks of life. Even in intellectual pursuits there are such things as plagiarism which, when it succeeds means the triumph of dishonesty. The triumph of what is other than moral is not infrequent, and what is worse, life is so conditioned to-day that pure and straight-forward morality finds it difficult to maintain itself. Is it any consolation to the moral man to be told that there is a future for him ?”

From the above three paragraphs you can see that modern society gives no encouragement to the development of true virtues. And so long as there is no social atmosphere suitable for the growth of a better life, the higher life will always be at a discount as it to-day is.

A STUDENT. Where, then, can we find a suitable social atmosphere ?

TEACHER. I have told you that a suitable social atmosphere is produced by moral men. The higher social atmosphere can be evolved by spiritually higher souls. Wherever these conditions are not fulfilled, the higher moral or spiritual atmosphere will be absent.

A STUDENT. Will you please tell us something about real moral atmosphere existing anywhere ?

TEACHER. Without exaggeration I can tell you that the moral atmosphere existing in our College is of a singular type. Dr. Chakravarty, Private Secretary to Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, came to deliver a lecture under the auspices of our Literary Circle. He repeatedly expressed both orally and in writing that during his stay in the College, he felt that he was somewhere in a place like Santiniketan. Miss Helen Mary Boulnois, daughter of a once Chief Justice of Lahore High Court, who delivered a lecture on “Mystic India” in our College Hall, was also enthusiastic about the spiritual atmosphere of the College. Recently another professor gave expression to similar sentiments about the College. You will find that as a rule boys also feel some peculiarity about this moral atmosphere. They remember it very much when they leave the College and breathe in another

atmosphere. There are some boys who have become permanently honest, deeply respectful to parents, considerate to others, helpful in small ways to many and anxious to do a good turn daily. There are those who have become compassionate and sympathetic to animals. This is the greatest service that the College is doing. You will find a similar atmosphere in the other institutions managed by the Dev Samaj.

A STUDENT. What is the kind of atmosphere that the Dev Samaj provides ?

TEACHER. I give you a few facts and you can draw the conclusions for yourselves. In the first place, the Dev Samaj does not admit any man even as the lowest grade member, who has not given up eight specified gross sins about which he takes the following pledges :

1. I shall not myself take or give or cause to be given to others intoxicants, such as, wine, opium, *bhang*, tobacco, *charas*, *chandu*, cocaine, etc., except on medical grounds.

2. I shall not myself eat or give or cause to be given to others for eating, flesh or eggs or anything made therefrom.

3. I shall neither gamble nor be helpful to others in such an act.

4. I shall neither steal anything nor help others in committing theft.

5. I shall not take bribes in the performance of my legitimate duties.

6. I shall not withhold any money or any other thing entrusted to me as deposit ; I shall not suppress payment of any donation promised by me towards a beneficent cause, nor withhold any debt borrowed by me from anybody, when I am able to pay or return it ; I shall not suppress payment of the price of anything purchased by me.

7. I shall neither commit adultery, nor help others in doing so, nor remarry in the life-time of my wife or husband.

8. I shall not knowingly kill any sentient being without a just cause for doing so, i.e., when one is obliged to use the right of defence for himself or his relations or property etc.

The freedom from these gross sins is the minimum moral life which the Dev Samaj is achieving in the lives of fit souls who come under its influence.

Beside this, there are hundreds of cases in which the sinners

have been so far changed that they have made amends for their past sins and crimes. Those who had obtained money, property or any other thing by dishonest means, have not only confessed their guilt to the wronged persons but have made amends to them by returning thousands of rupees with truly penitent hearts. In some cases, the sons have returned the moneys dishonestly acquired by their departed fathers or even fathers-in-law. Similar retributions have been made for various other sins.

Above all these changes, the most remarkable change that takes place in the soul of a fit person in the higher atmosphere of the Dev Samaj, is that he begins to realize the life of selfishness as an ugly thing. He appreciates that the life of unselfish service is a glorious gain.

This is the reason why so many men are devoting part or whole of their lives to the unselfish service of others.

This being the settled plan of work in the Dev Samaj, the promotion to higher grades is determined, not on the basis of education or wealth, but purely and exclusively on the basis of higher life or life of unselfish service. Thus it is that the dream of all those altruistic-minded philosophers has come true, who have yearned for such a society to come into existence, where only good men should occupy the position of trust and responsibility. In the Dev Samaj it is the most virtuous who comes at the helm of the affairs and not the most wealthy or the most highly-educated. Thus the Dev Samaj provides an atmosphere for destroying the weeds of evil forces and gardening of the roses of higher or altruistic life.

A STUDENT. Sir, it is strange that though Dev Samaj is known to be a moral society, yet there is a world of opposition existing against it.

TEACHER. The opposition is due to differences in beliefs. The Dev Samaj is bound to be gradually recognized when men would begin to value character above beliefs and prefer life of altruism to selfishness. Have you not heard the saying: "when wealth is lost, nothing is lost ; when health is lost, something is lost ; but when character is lost, everything is lost." When humanity awakens to the truth of this saying, the Dev Samaj is bound to come in great demand, and the Dev Samaj institutions will be welcomed everywhere. Till then, we have to work patiently and make every effort to be true to our ideals and thus by practical life win the sympathy of the people.



## NEED OF SEX PURITY OR CHASTITY

TEACHER.—Boys, today I want to give a talk to you on the need of chastity or purity in private life. You are now youthful and your present age is characterised as the stormy years of adolescence. At this time of your life every desire in you is very strong and it is at this stage of your life that you have to study seriously the nature and the effects of your desires.

A STUDENT.—Sir, we shall be happy if you tell us the need and importance of chaste and pure relations with women.

TEACHER.—I am glad that you want this aspect of your conduct to be dealt with first. I am not one of those who teach that men and women or boys and girls should be a taboo to each other. In society it is but inevitable that men and women should come in contact and so would boys and girls. It is impossible to stop this contact. What is necessary is to make this contact helpful and beneficial to both sexes.

A STUDENT.—Sir, there are some who teach strict purdah for women and they think that contact between sexes would lead to immorality.

TEACHER.—In order to save a child from fire it is not wise to keep him always shut out from fire. If we attempt this impossible task, we shall be neither doing good to the child nor showing our wisdom. I relate you a personal case. One day, when one of my children was eight or nine months old and he was in my lap, I found him trying to touch the lighted lamp that was on the table. I tried to pull back the hand of the boy, but as soon as I left the hand, he would try to reach the lamp. I knew that the lamp was hot and he would injure himself if he touched it at a time when I was absent, so I wanted to give him an experience. I took the hand of the child very near to the lamp so that he could feel the heat. When the heat became unbearable for him, he tried to pull back the hand. I let go his hand. Then, once more I took it near the lamp and, taking his hand in my own, placed his fingers on the globe and he immediately pulled it back. When I took it for the third time

towards the lamp, the child ceased getting attracted towards light and thus he became safe. I hope you know of another story which is given in our school text-books. There was a slave on board a ship. The slave never realized his safety in the ship because the ship was moving in water; he cried that he may be taken back to land. That was not possible for some days to come, so the Captain of the ship asked two sailors to throw the slave into the water and to rescue him after he had a good ducking! The slave had a personal experience of what drowning in water meant and therefore when the rescue party pulled him out and brought him to the deck, he realized the danger of water and the safety in the ship. What, therefore, a man needs is the consciousness of what is good and what is bad and develop attraction for the good and repulsion for the bad. As a rational being any other method will not prove beneficial to him.

A STUDENT.—I can understand that the better method of helping man is to *create consciousness in him for what is good and what is bad*. But till that consciousness develops, is it not necessary to segregate the sexes by purdah?

TEACHER.—Segregation is not possible in the case of human beings. You know that most of the civilized nations do not observe purdah. You know that even among those who observe purdah, all classes do not do so. The agriculturists who form the bulk of every country or nation, never observe purdah. Purdah was and is confined to the highest class and to some portion of the middle class. Even there, the purdah is vanishing. The education which is fast spreading will not let this custom last long. Therefore, even making allowance for the partiality for purdah which prevails in some classes, the larger portion of mankind even now does not observe it. When this is a fact and men and women and boys and girls have to come in contact, what is needed is the sublimation of this contact and not tabooing of it.

A STUDENT.—What is the meaning of the sublimation of the contact?

TEACHER.—By sublimation, we mean basing it on higher feelings and not on lower ones.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate this?

TEACHER. Let me give you an historical instance. It is an event in the life of Maharaja Sivaji that when a captive princess, the daughter of his enemy, was brought before him, Maharaja

Shivaji is reported to have said, "Princess, had you been my mother, I too would have been born a beautiful son." Here it was how the relationship was sublimated. The Maharaja looked at the princess with the eyes of a son. With this mental attitude, it was impossible for him to harm her in any way; and he did not harm her. He sent her back to her father with an escort, which befitted her position. If all kings had adopted this attitude, the horrors perpetrated against women in various wars would never have been heard of. The degradation of sex relation is responsible for the inhuman relations of man towards woman.

A STUDENT. Will you kindly give us more illustrations of how this relation can be sublimated?

TEACHER. The feeling of chivalry is another feeling which makes this relationship sublime. There is a true story of a Pathan who was at daggers drawn with a rich Hindu. The Pathan was determined to kill the Hindu. So, one day, he climbed the roof of his house and with a drawn sword got into the place where the Hindu was sleeping and he asked him to open the door. His wife was there with him in the room. She naturally was very much terrified. She would not let her husband go out, but she made her resolve which was very risky. She told her husband, "I am a woman and I am going to appeal to this Pathan as a wife appealing for the life of her husband. If I fail to excite his mercy or chivalry, I will die first before he kills you." So saying she went out by another door and standing before the Pathan she said, "Pathan, you belong to a brave race. I am at this time your sister and I appeal to you as a sister to grant me the life of my husband." The spirit of chivalry was awakened in the Pathan. He put his sword back in its scabbard and silently left the place. Next day, early in the morning some big baskets full of fruits were brought to the Hindu's house with a note in which these words were scribbled: "From a Pathan brother to a Hindu sister." From that time till the Pathan died, he treated the lady as his own sister and attended the marriage of her son and gave her the gifts which were due from a brother to a sister. You can see, boys, how chivalry sublimates this relation.

A STUDENT.—Sir, this example is very inspiring.

TEACHER.—It is. In the Mughal history, you will find how

Rajput women won over to their side one or two Mughal Emperors by sending a thread which we Hindus call *rakhi* and which thread the sisters tie on the wrists of their brothers. Whenever any relationship is to be sublimated, man's higher nature is to be awakened. It is the awakening of this higher nature which would sublimate this relationship also.

A STUDENT.—What are those higher virtues in man which make him sublimate this relationship?

TEACHER.—The first and most preliminary feeling is the feeling of respect. So long as a man does not develop this feeling, he would never consider the person of a woman sacred. There are societies which have developed wonderful respect for woman. You know among the European nations when a ship begins to sink and life-boats are lowered to save the passengers, it is a rule that women and children are the first to be saved. This is called social conscience, i.e., society as a whole paying homage to a higher convention. There are nations among whom it is considered very mean not to get up and give place to a lady in a meeting. This is also a social convention of a higher kind.

Once I attended a lecture in a college in the Bombay Presidency. This college was a co-educational institution. The lecturer was a famous man and, therefore, there was overcrowding. All seats were occupied. I was standing as I had no room to sit. All of a sudden about twenty girls came. As soon as the girls came, there was a loud demand from the audience to those sitting on the front seats to get up and make room for the ladies. At once the front rows were vacated for them. This was respect shown publicly to the fair sex. When this feeling awakens in the heart of an individual, he begins to treat the person of a lady with respect. It was this respect for the person of a woman which made Maharaja Shivaji to give due honour to the princess and send her back with a safe escort to her father. I had been lately reading in *The Bombay Sentinel* a small article on "Boys must treat girls with respect." Though it is a small article, it is full of beautiful ideas. In the concluding paragraph, the writer says :—

"Always give to other boys' sisters the *same degree of respect* that you would have other boys give to your sister. If this is your standard, I shall have no worry about the kind of life

you will live during what we sometimes speak of as the stormy years of adolescence."

This is true. As no Muslim can bear to see a mosque desecrated by so much as walking into it with shoes on and no Hindu would bear his temple to be desecrated in any way, so also no man would dare do wrong himself or to see others do wrong to his object of respect. As honesty applies a brake to the greed of man and never lets him take things dishonestly which rightly belong to others, in the same way, this feeling of respect applies a brake to the sex impulse of a man and cannot permit him to hurt any woman.

A STUDENT.—Is there any other feeling also which can help us to keep pure in relation of woman?

TEACHER.—There are several good feelings which can help you to do so. One of these feelings is the sense of one's own self-respect or honour. A boy who values his own honour can never, under any circumstances, do such an act for which he may have to feel ashamed. He values his own honour above every other thing.

STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate this?

TEACHER.—Yes, I will repeat the story of an Englishman, for it is very pertinent to our point. His friend was a French Count. The Count had married an Eastern Princess, and one day, he was telling his wife that his friend, the Englishman, was a very honourable gentleman and that he would never do an act which was dishonourable and he also asserted that he could leave her safely in charge of his friend and no amount of temptation would bring about his fall. The Princess felt it hard to believe this and at last it was arranged that the English gentleman should be put to test. The Count declared that he was going out and he left his wife under the protection of his friend. In fact, he had not gone out and he kept hiding in one of the secret places of his big palace. For the fixed period, perhaps a month, the Eastern princess is said to have placed all kinds of temptations in the way of the gentleman, and when she failed in all, she became aggressive, and flung herself on his person requesting him to accept her love. The sense of honour of the gentleman was so keenly stung that catching her by her hair, he threw her away and she fell on the ground with a heavy thud. At this stage her husband came out from his hiding

place and smiled and then revealed to the gentleman their conspiracy. There are persons who would prefer death to dishonour, but their number is small. It is these persons whose sense of honour has placed before mankind a higher ideal of conduct.

If a boy hasn't got the sense of honour, he is a poor soul. All our education, all our culture, all our wealth and position in life can have no value for us as men, if we lack the sense of honour, if we are guilty of actions which make us feel ashamed before others in case of exposure. Let it not be forgotten that the social conscience is not in favour of persons who lack the sense of honour. Ultimately, it is the honourable men that command permanent esteem.

A STUDENT. — Sir, can there be any other motive also which ought to be developed to check the wrong satisfaction of our sex instinct.

TEACHER. — Yes, there are. If you once realize that honour and purity are more precious to a girl than her money, houses, lands and degrees and that if she loses them she loses every thing, it will be very difficult for you to deprive her of them. There are men who were meat-eaters. They gave up meat-eating because they happened to see a slaughter house. The agonies of the dumb animals changed them into vegetarians. They could realize how precious life was even to animals and how unbearable was the pain inflicted on them. Sometimes people commit sin without realizing what it means for others. It was only two or three years ago that a murder was committed in one of the European countries and the real murderer escaped. Another man who was innocent was suspected of the crime and put in a lock-up. The real murderer read in papers how an innocent man was caught in his place. He could not bear to see an innocent man suffer for him. He, therefore, came out and surrendered himself. Here the murderer could not bear a man to lose his life for him and therefore in order to save that man he risked his own life.

There are cases of thieves who have returned the stolen property to the owners when they have come to realize how their victims have suffered by the shock. Such cases are few and far between, but they give us an insight into the better part in man and which cannot bear to see a victim suffering. In the same way, those men and boys who would realize what a havoc

is wrought by their actions when they rob a girl of her purity and honour, would desist from such an act and would risk their lives to save a girl from a similar danger at the hands of others. Remember, boys, whatever may be talked about in books and journals about the so-called free love, no man with any instinct of manliness would marry a girl whom he knows to have been free with others, though he may also have been one of her wrong-doers. Purity and honour of women are considered to be their best jewels and the best certificates in the marriage market. A woman, who has been injured by a boy and whose act is known to others, loses all respect in society and in the case of virgins, all the chances of a high matrimonial connection. Hence a boy who robs some girl of her honour and purity is the greatest coward and the meanest robber because he has lost her the self-esteem and the esteem of others and the chance of marrying in a respectable circle. Therefore, if for nothing else, at least on the consideration of humanity and good breeding every man should desist from this horrible crime.

It is not only those men or boys who actually harm a girl who are guilty of grave injustice to her but even those who invent slanders or circulate them against any girl or woman are also guilty of a serious crime against womenfolk. By such slanders they create mistrust against her and thus ruin her prospects of marriage.

ASTUDENT. — Are there any facts before you, Sir, of the dangers and risks to which the gentle sex is exposed by the brutality of man?

TEACHER. — There are so many examples from real life that they would fill a volume. I know of a very remarkably innocent girl, a daughter of a very influential man, who was betrayed by her innocence into the clutches of a young man and, before she knew what she was doing, her honour was gone. Had the girl been conscious of what she was doing she would have shot the boy. The boy was a rogue and the girl was a fool. This girl had already been betrothed in a very good family to a boy who was to graduate that year. The news spread. The betrothal was broken. For years, thereafter, she could not be married anywhere. In fact, she was forced into a marriage to a person whom she would never have married in her normal condition. This

incident took place in one of the States of India, outside the Punjab. The rogue who took advantage of the innocence of the girl did not realize what a hell of misery he had created for the girl, for her betrothed and above all for her parents who felt heart broken. Even the other sisters of the girl lost the chance of higher social connections.

There was another case which was still more pathetic. It was also a case of a bad boy who had exchanged letters with some girl of a good family. These letters were quite innocent as they were written by an innocent girl, but they could be misinterpreted and he took the fullest advantage of these letters and blasted the future marriage prospects of the girl. This was a case only of slander, but it achieved its wicked end.

In order to save oneself from this high crime, one should realize the horror of the results which follow from it and I am confident that if there is any humanity left in man, he would desist from this nefarious act which means so much misery for the girl and her guardians.

A STUDENT.—Sir, is there any other motive which should keep us away from this wrong way of life?

TEACHER.—There is a motive which does not seem to appeal to man just now. It is a motive which will be clear to those who believe in the law of heredity and good breeding. The object of sex-instinct is the procreation of one's children. Every man is intended to be a father and every woman is intended to be a mother. A man who has sown wild oats in his life must inevitably reap its harvest in his children and grand-children. It is, therefore, essential for every one of us to have a healthy and clean body, free from all the venereal diseases which spring from an immoral life. A man who is chaste will always be free from the risk of contracting venereal diseases. In itself this is one of the mightiest motives to keep us pure and clean in our sexual life. It is not known at all if the woman contacted has got the disease. Those persons who lack in morals are always exposed to this risk. The second thing is that a man who expects to marry a virgin wife or a woman who should have had no immoral relations, owes a duty to her to give her also a truly moral or bachelor husband. A man has no right to expect more than he himself can give and the time is coming when a pure and chaste woman would feel it a dishonour to enter into wedlock with a



man of corrupt morals. Besides this, it is chastity or purity which gives permanence to home life. A person who is immoral is really shaking the foundation of his home life. And as home is our anchor and our best port, how unwise and how wicked it is to adopt a course of life which would cost us this safe anchor and make us drift on the currents of dangerous waters.

As we have had enough for today, we shall talk on this matter further, tomorrow.

## SUBLIMATION OF SEX INSTINCT

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly tell us what attempts are made by various religious persons or cults to develop the feeling of chastity or purity in their heart ?

TEACHER.—Once, when I was a boy, ten or twelve years old, I was attracted by a crowd which had gathered round a sadhu. There was all around a chorus of admiration for him. When I inquired from one of the spectators as to why this sadhu was being admired, he said : “He is an ‘Indri-cut-Sadhu’.” He explained that in order to become chaste and pure, the sadhu had got his male organ amputated, and this was what made them look upon the sadhu with reverence.

A STUDENT.—Sir, is this a proper method of becoming chaste?

TEACHER.—This method is opposed to the law of Nature which rules our life and is therefore, neither sound nor practical.

I do not know whether you have heard of a very great sadhu and poet who tore out both his eyes with a hot iron because he was misled by his eyes to get attracted towards a woman. He was engaged in the *bhakti* of Krishna. He became famous. A rich man invited him to his house for lunch. After he had taken lunch, he mistook the wife of his host for his former beloved. Next time, on one pretext or another, he went to the house of his host and when he looked at the woman carefully, he discovered his mistake. At that time he felt deeply pained that lust should have again betrayed him. He held his eyes responsible for that and tore them out. This shows his extreme agony at his fall, though the remedy which he applied was not sound.

But there have been several other methods adopted by several great men which are being followed even now.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate some of them ?

TEACHER.—It is related of poet Tulsidas that he was very attached to his wife. To meet her at her parents' house, in his mad infatuation, he crossed the river on a corpse taking it for a

small wooden boat, and climbed up into her window with the help of a serpent which he mistook for a rope. When he entered the room of his wife and woke her up, she got angry with him and discovering how he had come to her house, she rebuked him severely and said. "If you were to love Rama as whole-heartedly as you love lust, you would surely get salvation." These words, it is said, revolutionized his life.

A highly educated man enjoying a very high position in life. narrated to me the story of his fight with lust. He spoke thus :

"When I was in college, I came under influences which made me look upon sex desire as a disease which I had to fight out. I was told that looking upon a woman as mother and deepening this feeling would give me the needed control. I began that practice. Even when I married, I did not want to have any sexual relation with my wife and, therefore, I practised by deep reflection the idea of her motherhood. I felt myself as a child in her womb just developing in order to see the light of the day. In course of time, she appeared to me not as a wife but as a mother. This was how I overcame lust."

A STUDENT.—Sir, can a man's wife be his mother ?

TEACHER.—No, it cannot be. The best course for such a man is not to marry or if he marries he must marry her on the definite understanding that they will have no sexual relation. If both agree, they may, if they so like, continue in that relation, but in view of the fact that they are bound by wedlock, the wife shall remain a wife even though, by mutual agreement, they avoid the sexual act. There have been a few such marriages in the world. They are known as a form of companionship.

A STUDENT.—Is sexual relation with one's wife a sin ?

TEACHER.—No, it is not. As it is not a sin to eat and drink, so there is no sin in having sex relation with one's wedded partner. Within proper limits, it is both physically and mentally healthy.

A STUDENT.—Why is it then that there are so many organizations which impose life-long celibacy on their workers and call them monks and nuns or *bhikshu* and *bhikshni*, or *sadhu* and *sadhni* or *sannyasi* and *sannyasni* ?

TEACHER.—There are some thinkers who consider sex instinct to be fundamentally wrong. Therefore, though they

permit it in the case of laymen, they prohibit its exercise in the case of those who live for religion. That is why you find among the Roman Catholics millions of persons who have lived and died as monks and nuns. Among the Buddhists such persons are known as *angrihika*. Among Hindus they are called *sannyasis*. Those who become *sannyasis* give up all intercourse even with their wedded wives. They look upon their wedded partners as mothers. As the sex instinct is not fundamentally wrong, this kind of philosophy has not succeeded and there have been some terrible failures.

A STUDENT.—Sir, is it then necessary for everyone to marry?

TEACHER.—No, there are persons who are physically unfit to marry. They have no right to marry. There are persons who are suffering from incurable or infectious diseases. They have no right to marry. There are men who have neither the means nor the capacity to maintain a wife and children. Such people also have no right to marry. There are persons who are devoted to some great cause and they don't want to divert their energies and attention from that cause. Such great men consider themselves wedded to their cause. They may not marry. Besides this, marriage is a personal affair. If any person out of a whim or fancy or fear of responsibility, gives up the thought of marriage, he has a right to do so. But in all these cases what I want to impress upon you is that sex instinct is not fundamentally wrong. However, it is not necessary to make a fetish of this feeling. There are cults which teach that a person who does not marry commits a sin. This is also an extreme view.

Any person who is physically fit and sound and able enough to take the responsibility of being a husband and father, has a perfect right to marry. But though marriage is proper, the sexual act out of lawful wedlock is immoral and, therefore, most reprehensible.

A STUDENT.—Sir, is not marriage a social convention and have we, therefore, no right to break it?

TEACHER.—All social conventions are not bad. In fact, most of them are sound, but in any case when we are living in society, our freedom of action is limited according to its rules. These obligations are necessary for the existence and healthy working of society. If these obligations are not observed,

society will break into pieces. Family is a unit of society and it is not possible to form a family without social sanctions. The permanency of a family requires the permanency of a marriage bond. This is accepted even in the most revolutionary societies.

A STUDENT.—If marriage is a good institution and sex instinct is not fundamentally wrong, does no man suffer by the marriage relation if he indulges in sex relation as he pleases ?

TEACHER.—Sex instinct is not fundamentally wrong. Its proper use is even helpful to life, but there are dangers of its improper indulgence even in married life. What is needed is the light which can reveal to us the wrong side of this instinct. Uncontrolled sex desire not only makes a man go wrong in relation to persons outside wedlock, but makes him prove harmful even to himself and to his wedded partner. Hunger is a very helpful thing, but over-eating or getting food by theft lands a hungry man into trouble. The sex instinct, though helpful, is bound to land a man into a terrible abyss, if he tries to satisfy it by illegitimate means or immoral ways or over-indulges in relation to his wedded partner. The difficulty is that either the sex instinct is considered fundamentally wrong and, therefore, deserving of being rooted out or it is held or considered as the one thing highly desirable and worth full enjoyment in life and, therefore, worth being indulged in as much as possible. Both ways men go wrong.

A STUDENT.—Sir, you have given us instances of persons who consider sex instinct fundamentally wrong. Will you kindly give us illustrations of the lives of those persons who live for sex instinct ?

TEACHER.—The world is full of them and you young men ought to know better. The sex instinct has been such an obsession with men that poetry, literature, music, etc., have been influenced by it. It is difficult for a young man to compose a song for any *mushaira* where this lust is not worshipped as love. There is hardly any literature which is very popular and does not deal with lust as love. Those songs are most popular which talk of men and women in terms of sex. Even in clubs and gatherings, the ever-present topic which is popular with men is talk about lust. If there is any feeling which has produced the greatest mistrust in mankind, it is lust. What is

*pardah* ? It is a standing monument crying against the dominance of lust in man. Why are men and women segregated ? It is because of lust. Why is it that separate institutions for boys and girls are getting popular ? It is because we know that one of the most powerful elements which rule men is lust. There are so many restrictions placed in every home against the free mixing of men and women and boys and girls, because this lust has made a beast of man. He is not worthy of trust. He betrays his best friends. This feeling makes him disloyal even to his benefactors. It is because lust has wrought such havoc in society that several thinkers have been made to believe that this instinct is fundamentally wrong. Cases have taken place when a man has entrusted his wife to a friend and this friend has repaid his trust by making this wife unfaithful to her husband. A college student allows his college mate free access to his family and he pays him back by seducing his sister ! Knowing the fact that marriage between him and his friend's sister is prohibited by caste and religious rules, he does not care ! The betrayed friend threatens to commit suicide if his sister is not restored to him, but the treacherous friend does not care. The betrayed friend actually commits suicide, but this treacherous friend does not mind. A highly respectable officer allows another officer to visit his house and play tennis with his daughter. The guest knows that he cannot marry in the host's house under any circumstances as caste and religious restrictions stand in the way. Knowing this, he steals the affections of his host's daughter and ultimately makes her faithless to her parents. By this domestic disaster the guest satisfies his lust. In fact, lust, has made a beast of man.

A STUDENT.—If the sex instinct is not fundamentally wrong, how are we to make it helpful in life ?

TEACHER.—There are two ways by which those anxious to get out of this danger can benefit themselves. One is that they should live in higher moral society. There is no force so efficacious as the atmosphere of higher society. The man, whom I quoted in my first article on this subject, has also rightly said : "Boys should cultivate a hatred for vulgarity. If a boy will do this when he is young, he will hate it when he is a man." Choose good companions. In the course of my work, I have had occasions to ask persons who have found their way

into prison : "What brought you to this ?" and the answer again and again, has been : "Bad company." I have no doubt that more boys go wrong through bad company than through any other agency. When a boy keeps bad company, it will be very hard for him not to do as they do. Many times he will do wrong rather than be called 'soft'—a 'sissy'.

What actually harms a man or a boy is the company of vulgar people. This vulgarity is born in highly sex-ridden people. As such persons are innumerable, most of the boys get ruined because they breathe in their atmosphere. Sometimes they become so vulgar that it is difficult for them to speak two words without indulging in vulgarity. In fact, they become cesspools and emit most filthy odours.

In our society of Dev Samaj, what helps us in the first place is this moral atmosphere. In our society nobody can become a member who, besides other vices, does not give up and pledges to refrain permanently from the vice of adultery. Hence all the members of the Dev Samaj are free from it. Lust, therefore, is given a death-blow in our society. Besides this, no member can marry a second time during the life-time of his first wife under any circumstances. Thus what is being emphasized in the Dev Samaj is not only sex-purity but even loyalty to the wedded partner. Thus fidelity is given great preference over sex-gratification. There have been cases in the Dev Samaj of men whose wives have been permanent invalids and yet they have remained faithful to them. In such a society vulgarity is absolutely absent. And, therefore, even the weak souls get protection against it and grow strong in sex-purity. This atmosphere has been created by one who was a perfect embodiment of complete love for truth and goodness and had complete hatred for untruth and wrong. His psychic influences create that holy atmosphere and those who come under these influences begin to feel hatred for adultery or sexual impurity. These psychic influences make it possible for a weak man to achieve what was considered difficult in the case of even highly religious souls. That is why we, the Dev Samajists, feel grateful to our Master who has produced this change in us, so that we do marry and live social life and yet we are protected against the poisonous shafts of lust.

## THE NATURE OF SELF-PURIFICATION

TEACHER.—To-day I want to give you a talk on one of the most important and necessary virtues. I call it the virtue of self-purification.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly explain to us what is meant by self-purification ?

TEACHER.—Ordinarily, every man is led by his low-loves and low-hates, to think evil thoughts and to do evil deeds. These leave behind in the soul sediments of impurity. Just take an example. A man thinks of cheating another. He plans his means and puts them into execution. He succeeds in cheating him. All this working of his thoughts and actions makes him more selfish and anti-social. The result is that his soul becomes perverted and impure. It degenerates his soul. In this case, self-purification consists in awakening him to the horror and ugliness of these dishonest thoughts and dishonest actions of his, and creating in him a feeling or urge to pay back the ill-gotten amount to the defrauded person. When a man succeeds in doing so, he casts off the impurity which had gathered about his soul. This action elevates his soul and purifies it. Such an awakening to or consciousness of our wrongs done to others and development of the capacity to make amends for them by making just retribution, is called a process of soul-purification.

A STUDENT.—Is it possible for a man to arrive at a stage when he can boldly confess the wrong that he has done and make adequate reparation for it?

TEACHER.—In suitable environments, a fit soul can arrive at that stage. Let me give you some illustrations from real life. There was a *Brahman Patwari*. In the arrogance of his power, he once beat a sweeper so severely that the poor victim literally writhed in agony. He rolled on the ground in pain. All his appeals to the cruel Pandit made the latter more cruel and more revengeful. This horrible maltreatment at the hands of a person vested with Government authority naturally left a bitter scar on his heart. In fact iron had entered his soul. Years after,



this Pandit, while breathing in the suitable environment of higher life, suddenly remembered this ugly incident of his life. The light that entered his soul portrayed before him the ugliness of his dastardly act in such horrid colours that he hid his face in his hands and broke into sobs. He did not content himself merely with shedding tears. He determined to remove the scar of agony left on the sweeper's heart. He went to the sweeper and with folded hands and eyes bedewed with tears, tendered apology for the act that he had done years before. The sweeper would not listen to him, saying, "Pandit, your cruelty towards me is such that I can neither forget it nor forgive it." The Pandit was determined to pacify the sweepers' heart. He, therefore, handed to him his heavy stick and said, "Please, ease the pain of your heart by belabouring me with this stick!" On this, the sweeper's heart melted and he said, "I wonder that a cruel man like you should have changed so marvellously. I bless him who has changed a person like you into such an humble and penitent soul."

Boys, you can see from this real example of real life how self-purification unites two hearts torn by hatred. In all our relations one of the most effective ways to bring about unity and harmony, is this virtue of self-purification.

A STUDENT.—Kindly give us some more illustrations bearing on some other phases of life.

TEACHER.—I have already talked to you about a friend of mine who is a doctor. His self-purification exercises are very instructive. His greed for money had not only made his life miserable but had made him a cheat as well. Once a friend of his sought his help in influencing a magistrate before whom his (friend's) case was pending. This doctor demanded some money as bribes for the magistrate. He got a substantial amount from his friend and even went to the house of the magistrate, but he paid nothing to him. He misappropriated the whole amount. Yet he shamelessly assured his friend that the magistrate had undertaken to favour him. However, the magistrate decided the case against the man, but punished him with a fine only. When the man came out, he confronted the doctor and charged him with breach of trust. But the doctor blatantly told him, "If I had not given the amount to the magistrate, he would have sent you to jail." Years rolled over

this incident. Once he was sitting in a meeting charged with the atmosphere of higher life, when he got an awakening to the ugliness of this act of his. He grew restless. As he got more and more of light and power his restlessness grew so intolerable that he was obliged to go to his above friend, and confessed to him the crime and paid back the defrauded amount to him. This act of his removed at one stroke the wall of estrangement which his dishonest act had raised between the two friends, and their hearts grew nearer to each other. You can, therefore, see the efficacy of self-purification.

A STUDENT.—If all of us were to carry out this exercise of self-purification, would not most of the disharmony in human relations end ?

TEACHER—Assuredly all such disharmony will end. Let me give you another illustration dealing with another phase of life. Once a *Tehsildar* gave such a severe beating to his wife that she lost her two teeth. This was a crime in law, while morally it was the most reprehensible act. And yet in his callous condition of heart, he felt nothing wrong in it. After a long time he happened to sit in a meeting charged with the atmosphere of higher life, when light flashed on his mind and opened before him the vistas of his wrong life. The one thing that forcefully struck his mind was his cruel behaviour towards his wife. In the open meeting he narrated the injustice he had done to his wife and in tears he openly apologized to her. This purified his heart of the evil effects left on it by his old sinful act and he grew nearer to his wife.

A STUDENT.—Is it, Sir, very difficult to see one's own fault and apologize for it ?

TEACHER.—This is one of the most difficult things in life. Once I visited a school. I gave a piece of translation to all the students. After they had completed it, I asked them one by one in turn, to read their translation. As they read, I corrected them. There was one boy who read the best translation in the class. I suspected that he was not reading his own translation but was simply rehearsing the corrected sentences which I had given. As I felt suspicious, I asked him if he was really reading his own translation. He said, "Sir, I am reading my own translation." I was not convinced. I asked him to bring his exercise book to me and repeated once again, "If you have

not done your translation, please tell me so." He said impudently, "Here is my exercise book, Sir, you can see it." I took it from him and you can judge my astonishment when I found that there was not a single word which he had translated. His exercise book was completely blank. You can, therefore, see how difficult it is for a man to confess his own wrongs. How many boys are there who can speak the truth which goes against them? In the courts of law you will come across thousands of cases where even a real culprit has the courage to say that he is innocent.

A STUDENT.—Is such a thing possible in homes?

TEACHER.—It is not only possible but it is actually taking place every day. Let me give you another instance of a student. There was an inmate of our boarding house. When he was first admitted to our College, I told his father definitely that he should not give the boy more than twenty-five rupees a month. I even told him that if at any time the boy needed more money, he should get it certified by me. The father came to me after twelve months and to my utter surprise he said that for some months he had been sending Rs. 40 a month to the boy. When I asked him why he did so, he said that the boy had written to him that he had engaged a tutor in Sanskrit, whom he had to pay Rs. 15 a month. I told him that it was a lie. Then, in the presence of that boy, his poor father narrated the tale of his woe, how this additional demand had practically driven them to the wall. He and his wife were living on practically nothing. They couldn't get new clothes made for themselves and they had to deny themselves a lot of things which they needed. So saying his heart was moved and tears welled out of his eyes. But the boy stood there unconcerned, as if he had done nothing wrong. I rebuked the boy and even appealed to him to say whether all that he had done to his father was just and fair. But all these rebukes and appeals fell flat on him. He would not even say so much as, "I am sorry." On the contrary, he said, "If my father cannot defray my expenses, he should better withdraw me from the College." The father was deeply shocked and he said, 'Ungrateful boy, it is impossible for me to give you further education. If you are so callous now, any further education would be simply wasted on you and make you worse.' So saying, he withdrew him from the College and

stopped his further education. If the boy had simply seen the wrong side of his life and expressed regret for what he had done, he would have not only soothed his father's heart but brought about better relations between himself and his father. In that case most probably his father would not have stopped his studies. If there is one thing which is most difficult in the world, it is an effort to see one's own wrongs and to make a just reparation for them.

A STUDENT.—Why is it, Sir, that self-examination and self-purification are so difficult for an ordinary man ?

TEACHER.—This is all due to man's self-love. Man loves his self so much that he also loves everything associated with it. He loves even his own evil life, he loves his perverted views, he loves even his wrong beliefs, his wrong opinions, his evil wishes, etc. It amounts almost to a crucifixion for him to go against this self-love. By confession of one's own faults man has to humiliate his self and thus offend against his self-love. This is not possible so long as some new factor does not enter his soul.

A STUDENT.—What is that new factor, Sir ?

TEACHER.—This new factor consists of the highest psychic influences charged with new light and new power. This new light is psychic light. This new power is psychic power. They have nothing to do with physical or intellectual light and power. This psychic light reveals the nature of his soul to man, as it really is and not as he has been believing it to be. This psychic light shows evil and wrong as poison for his soul. A man cannot bear to have poison in himself ; so he tries to throw it out. This psychic power gives him the strength to throw out the poison of vicious life. Those, therefore, who are able to live in an atmosphere full of this psychic light and psychic power, begin to see the wrongs that they do or have done to others in their ugliest form and they endeavour to wash their souls clean of them. In absence of this psychic light and psychic power, man lives a life of darkness. His self-love is supreme. He loves everything in himself. He cannot, therefore, see his wrongs as wrong. In his perversion he sees his wrongs as right.

A STUDENT.—Will you, Sir, illustrate how in this soul-darkness, man sees his wrongs as right and others' right things as

wrong ?

TEACHER.—One day, two medical graduates—husband and wife—had an engagement with me. When they came to see me, the wife appeared sullen. I asked her husband what the matter was and why his wife was so sulky and so irritable. He said, "We had an appointment with you. I knew that you must be expecting us. My wife was talking with her friends and I feared that she might fail to take count of time. I, therefore, told her, 'Beloved, we have to reach in time, would you kindly go and dress.' From that time upto now her whole attitude has changed. She has not even talked with me on the way. I don't know how I was in the wrong." Now, here the wife was in the wrong. Time engagements have to be kept or one proves false. The husband's anxiety to reach in time was justified, but the wife could not tolerate any interference with her talk to her friends. She could not see the justice of her husband's anxiety. She simply felt that he had interfered. Hence, though she was in the wrong, she said that she was in the right. Is it possible for such a pair to live long in harmony ? Just a kind word from the wife that she was sorry, would have ended the tension. But she did not feel sorry and, therefore, she destroyed her own peace of mind and that of her husband.

A STUDENT.—I can see, Sir, the great need of self-purification. I also see that it is a most difficult and uphill task to develop that frame of mind. I also see that without possessing that frame of mind most of our domestic and social troubles cannot end, but what surprises me is the fact that men and women all around do not realize the need of this virtue and, therefore, there is no demand for it anywhere. I don't find our parents teaching us this, nor our friends and our teachers making an effort to help us in this. On the contrary every man finds hundreds who encourage him in not confessing his wrongs. But can education awaken us to the need and evolution of this virtue?

TEACHER.—The light of education is not competent to awaken mankind to this new frame of mind. I give you an illustration. There was a graduate, Assistant District Inspector of Schools, who followed a well-known sect in the Punjab. This graduate came, by chance, to attend a meeting which was charged with the atmosphere of higher life. The psychic light

entered his soul, and he made confessions of those wrongs, which in the absence of that light he could never have confessed. His friend, a pleader, had given him some money to purchase genuine ghee from some village. He purchased the ghee at a cheap rate but he charged his friend the price at which the ghee was sold in his town. He thus made a gain of a small amount. A man in his position is not ordinarily expected to commit such a breach of trust. And yet this graduate and Assistant District Inspector of Schools did commit it. And he had been happy. But this new light showed him the ugliness of his conduct. He repented and in an open meeting he made a clean breast of it. He had also injured a Muslim teacher because he was a Muslim. He wrote to him a letter of apology. All this change was a glorious change. Had it continued in his life, it would not only have ennobled him but would have made his relations sweeter with all those with whom he had gone wrong. That graduate's father was a pleader and he was a leader of his sect. As soon as he came to know of such a change in his son, he grew angry with him. He sent for him and in the presence of some other leaders of the same sect told him, "There is nothing in doing wrong to another provided one does not have the weakness to confess it and weep like a woman over it. By such confessions of wrong and by retributions, man falls in the estimation of others." By continued persuasion and effective threats, they succeeded in cutting the graduate off from that beautiful atmosphere. You can, therefore, see that in the absence of that unique light, even the highly educated men and leaders of religious sects feel that it is wrong to make adequate retribution for the wrongs one has committed. They cannot see and they cannot believe that a man rises in the estimation of the world by righting the wrong that he has done. It is not by sitting tight over wrong, but by purging it out of our soul, that we become better men. And it is the invariable experience of those who have made amends that they have not only felt relieved at heart and elevated in mind but they have risen also very high in the estimation of the world.

A STUDENT.—Have you, Sir, got the personal experience of such an atmosphere ?

TEACHER.—Yes, I have. The society in which I live is charged with this unique atmosphere. It is by breathing in that

atmosphere that I am able to live the life which is of some service to you students and to all those who come in contact with me. This unique atmosphere is so very precious that its value cannot be measured even in gold. Those who have ever breathed in this atmosphere can rarely forget its fragrance and its ennobling influences. This atmosphere is in fact life-building.

## THE NEED OF SELF-PURIFICATION

A STUDENT.—What is the effect on our life if we do not attend to our self-purification ?

TEACHER.—It is the law for every organism that for its healthy functioning it should throw out the accumulated foreign matter. So far as our physical body is concerned, it is but necessary that our bowels should move daily and there should be free urination, and also good perspiration. By these means we cast out impurities from our bodies. If by any means any of these processes is obstructed, our body begins to show signs of disease and weakness. The same law reigns in the soul-world. If we do not purge our soul of the impurities that collect there—by evil thoughts and evil acts—our soul would grow weak and diseased. This is the inevitable result of the absence of self-purification.

A STUDENT.—In the physical world, Sir, we at once feel the effects of the non-purging of impurities. But in the spiritual world, we do not feel conscious of any such loss or any such harm done to our soul by the absence of self-purification.

TEACHER.—In order to feel certain things, we should have corresponding sensitiveness. Even in the physical world there are several diseases whose effect we don't feel though we suffer nonetheless. When any of our limbs gets paralysed it loses all its sensitiveness. In certain cases, we don't feel even the effects of scorching to such a limb by fire. In the soul-world too, if we have lost moral sensitiveness or spiritual sensitiveness we are like paralysed souls possessing no sensitiveness to the destructive effects of evil. As bodily paralysis is a calamity, so is the moral paralysis a million times more terrible calamity. All that we need is to develop sensitiveness which would feel the effects of moral evil as something hot and burning and therefore something to be cast off.

A STUDENT.—Suppose, Sir, we don't develop moral or soul sensitiveness and allow evil to have its sway on us, do we suffer physically ?



TEACHER.—We suffer both morally and physically. A man who is morally dead or insensitive, becomes degraded in life and loses one most precious thing, i.e., moral vitality or constructive power of soul. The one power that can enable a man to overcome temptation and stand loyal, faithful and true to any higher cause, is moral vitality or constructive power of soul. It is this moral vitality which makes a man heroically face the greatest dangers of life. In a word, this moral vitality is what gives man a stamina. Besides this vital loss, a morally devitalized man is blind. In his blindness, he has recourse to ways and means which not unoften invite upon his head a very disastrous reaction, which the evil man could not foresee.

A STUDENT.—Sir, will you please illustrate this point ?

TEACHER.—I give you some facts and you can draw your own conclusions. When I was a child studying in a primary class, I read a story in a text-book which has left a lasting impression on me. It is said that a man was urinating. A mischievous man came behind him and acted out an indecent joke. The man got up and instead of punishing the man gave him one rupee. A passer-by who felt astonished at this conduct of the man, asked him why it was that he had rewarded one who deserved a sound thrashing. The man said, "I have sent him direct into the jaws of death. There is no greater punishment for a man than his success in evil life. This success emboldens him to repeat the evil. In this great world, he will find a Tartar and suffer the dire consequences." After some days, the same mischievous man found a Pathan urinating in a street. He cut the same indecent practical joke on him. The Pathan got furious, drew his dagger and killed the man on the spot. This is how evil had a direct reaction in bringing about the death of the man.

There is another case which came within my knowledge. A brilliant young student belonging to an agricultural class was anxious to extend his landed property. There was a poor fisherman in the village. The uncle of this young man took forcible possession of his land. That poor man was so weak and helpless that he had neither the money to fight with these rich and influential men nor could he secure one single witness to give true evidence for him. This brilliant young man who had a very high university record was happy that his uncle

had dispossessed the poor, helpless fisherman and thus enlarged his landed property. After finishing his university career, he secured a very high job. He utilized all his power and authority in getting more and more land. One of the methods that he employed was to marry heiresses who possessed large landed property in their own names. His last wife deserted him at the instigation of her relations. She denied her marriage with him. Now, this young man did not realize how his conduct was being unfavourably looked upon by his superiors. He went on in his career till one day I learnt that he had lost his high job as his services were dispensed with. He thus lost not only reputation but influence, too. The head of the family was involved in another trouble which was the direct result of this same grabbing habit. A criminal case was instituted against him and he was convicted to rigorous imprisonment. Thus a family which had become the foremost family in the district but which had gone the wrong way, had a direct reaction in the cropping up of those troubles and complications which brought disgrace and a heavy loss to them. If this family had at the very start realized the need of self-purification, its members would never have suffered as they did, and it would never have come to grief as it did come to. Thus you can find that the life of sin does not always escape direct punishment even on the physical plane.

A STUDENT.—The last instance, Sir, is an eye-opener. Will you please give us some more instances where the reactions of evil life have been equal and opposite ?

TEACHER.—There were four leading men of a place. They had conspired to persecute a most innocent man and a great benefactor of his country. They launched civil and criminal cases against him. These proceedings lasted for five years. They were determined to send him to jail, to destroy his mission, to deprive him of his *ashrama* and thus to do all in their power to ruin him. One of these men who took the most active part was an advocate. What happened was this: That most innocent and great benefactor of humanity came out of these persecutions more glorious than before. And if any man suffered, it was that pleader who had taken the most active part as a persecutor. His licence was forfeited. His own palatial house was sold. He was sent to jail. Thus, all that he had planned

against that most innocent person. reacted upon his own head. Out of the remaining three men who supported him in the persecutions, one was a judge. This official got involved in a bribe case. When the proceedings were taken against him he absconded. He thus not only lost his job but became an exile. The third man who was an advocate died a premature death. The fourth man repented his act and withdrew. Here also, you have got a case where the reactions have been equal and opposite. The evil rebounded on the heads of the evil-doers.

A STUDENT.—This is a telling instance. Here at least the evil-doer got exactly what he had planned for another. Saint Farida was right when he said: "O man, if some man digs a ditch for you, you go your way. Be at ease that one day he himself will fall into it." Though there are several instances of life where the evil has recoiled on the head of the evil-doer exactly as he planned it for another, yet in many cases we do not find this to be the case. If every evil-doer were to get back the full measure of punishment in this world, man in general would be discouraged in his evil course of life. But the fact is that though evil man suffers by becoming an evil personality, he does not always receive a concrete punishment on this earth.

TEACHER.—Yes, you are right that in every case an evil-doer does not get the punishment which he and others can see and believe to be just punishment. But it is not true that an evil-doer gets no punishment in this world. Soul is the chief part in the being of man. When the soul gets evil and becomes blind and insane, it cannot but affect the body and lead a man to commit blunders. It is these blunders that entrap a man in a snare from which he does not always escape. Some form of external punishment cannot but inevitably ensue from the evil which is present in the soul. There was an eminent advocate who had made a large fortune by his practice. He was anything but straight-forward in his dealings with men. His main object was to rise. He did not care for the means. If any man stood in his way, he would crush him without the least scruple. If a man sided with him, he would go to any length to serve him, even though in doing so he had to commit sins and crimes. In fact, he never became a true friend. His dealings were motivated by his personal benefit. By various manipulations, he remained the Mayor of a big Municipality for more

than ten years consecutively. I was quite a young man when he rose to eminence. I found people were full of hatred against him but they were always afraid of him. He was a strong man and, therefore he crushed many. But all this conduct of his was gradually producing a reaction and a very powerful force began to grow up against him. At the height of his power he stood for the Assembly seat in his State against another man who was known to be a saint. The power of manipulation which this man possessed was so great that people were almost certain that he would be returned. The constituency from which he stood, consisted of three districts, but the largest number of votes was controlled by his own town. He was cock-sure that his town would stand by him and that nobody would dare go against him. This was due to his vain glory. The votes were recorded by ballot. When the result was declared, it was found that his own town brought defeat on him. It was then that he felt shocked and some sense returned to him that the rule of might is not a safe rule. The disgrace of that defeat brought a terrible collapse of his body and it was feared that he would pass away. By his good luck he survived that shock. He is no more now, having passed away years ago. But his life has left a lesson for me and others that those who live at the cost of moral values, are building their house of life on sand. Here the reaction was not exactly the opposite and equal. It was also long delayed but it was none the less sure and effective. Even the glory for which he fought his battles and committed several acts of injustice, slipped out of his fingers. In fact, those who follow the wrong path of life seem to have short memories. Otherwise in daily life, we come across several instances where evil brings about external evil reactions in a conspicuous form.

There is one other telling instance how an evil act ultimately rebounds on the head of the evil-doer. It is said that in one of the provincial towns of India, a hawker happened to attract the attention of a big officer. From a hawker, he became a petty contractor. From this position, he rose to be a big contractor. It is said that the officer invested several thousands of his own money with the contractor in order to reap the share of the profit. He could not openly become a partner as he was in service. This officer suddenly died. When the widow

of the officer demanded just her money back from the contractor, he denied having received it. The woman in the agony of loss and helpless widowhood cursed the man and said, "Remember, that the widow and the orphans whom you have wronged are being reduced to poverty by you. Don't think that your children will profit by this tainted money!" Every aggrieved person curses the offender but no evil-doer attaches any importance to it. That contractor also very naturally attached no importance to it. Time rolled on. The contractor died. The fate of his family, as I have heard, is instructive. One branch of the family was practically blotted out as two died a violent death and one committed suicide. The fate of the other branch also was heart-breaking. I do not ascribe all these calamities, which befell, to the curse of the widow. But I do ascribe it to the curse of evil life. The princely legacy which was inherited by his children contained also the tradition of how this legacy was made. That tradition served as an evil example. The easy money that they got and the legacy of the evil example that they inherited put them on the wrong track of life. The result was what I have described above. We never realize that evil life makes us blind and we become mad souls. This blind and mad soul is the pilot of our life. How can it steer to safe shore the ship of our life ! In the largest majority of cases it wrecks itself on the hidden rocks and in the remaining cases it smashes itself even on the rocks which are clearly visible. Let it be remembered that no amount of hypocrisy could save us from the just effects of evil life. History of mankind is replete with instances of how the veil of hypocrisy has been torn and how the ghosts of evil life not only haunt the perpetrator but even his progeny.

I have cited these very few instances as just illustrations of the fact that evil ultimately rebounds on the head of the evil-doer, even physically. Internally, it makes a mess of our life and its effects are writ large on our whole being. What is, therefore, needed is to get that frame of mind which may make us feel ashamed of our evil life and produce a strong urge in us to make full amends to the persons whom we have made to suffer by our evil thoughts and evil life. In the law-bound universe, no action goes without producing corresponding result. If we want to escape the result we should fulfil the law. Our mere pious wishes or sentimental mumblings would not help us.

## UNDERSTANDING AND CHARITY

TEACHER.—Today I want to give you a talk on the need of understanding and charity. When we become non-understanding and non-charitable, we create hell in our relations. It is because a son is not able to understand his father and a daughter-in-law is not able to understand her mother-in-law or vice versa, that you find domestic friction. The young have a world of their own, while the old and experienced parents have a world of their own. If they were only to attempt to understand each other's view point and also become charitable in their outlook, their homes would be the sweetest thing. The same truth applies to all other relations.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly give us some illustrations to bring the point home to us?

TEACHER.—I know of a gentleman who was once very wealthy. He had given about seven thousand rupees as a loan to another man. The latter was very much hard up and, therefore, was not able even to pay the interest. Once both the debtor and the creditor had to attend a great festival. The debtor prepared some new clothes for his children, suited to the occasion. The creditor, not understanding the position of the debtor, took this fact as an occasion to rebuke him hard by saying, "You have money enough to purchase the new dresses for your children but you have nothing to pay even the interest on the loan. This is not at all creditable on your part." The debtor happened to meet me the same day and actually wept at the stinging remarks of the creditor. The wheel of fortune took a sudden turn. This time it was the creditor who lost money and the debtor made money. Now, this old creditor approached the old debtor for a loan of fifteen or sixteen thousands of rupees. The old debtor, now a rich man, gave the amount to him. Because of the straitened circumstances, the old creditor, now a poor man, was not able to pay the interest and both of them again met on a festival. The children of the old creditor, who was now a debtor, were well-dressed

suitable for the occasion. The old debtor, but now a new creditor, came to me and said, "Just look at the man. He has enough money to purchase new dresses for his children but he has nothing to pay off his debt to me!" I reminded him of what these very expressions had meant for him when he was a poor man. The man replied, "This is an occasion just to give him tit for tat." I told him that it was uncharitable. "If the old creditor lacked understanding, you are lacking in charity. Both of you, therefore, intend to create hell for each other." You can, therefore, see that there is need for both understanding and charity.

A STUDENT.—Indeed, there is.

TEACHER.—In the same way there is want of understanding even between our nearest relations. Once a picture was running in a cinema. It showed that there was a widow who had brought up her own son from his infancy and educated him. After the boy had settled in life, he got married. The daughter-in-law was an inexperienced young girl who would do things which the experienced lady considered dangerous. She was a mother-in-law and she took that girl for her child. One day, when she rebuked her for some wrong act, the daughter-in-law, who had acquired complete influence on her husband, grew so bold as to give a slap on the face of her mother-in-law. The mother-in-law felt stunned, wept hard and, before her son arrived, she had left the house for good. After some years, this son died, leaving behind a young child in the lap of his widowed wife. She brought up her son, educated him and got him established in life. The boy got married. The former daughter-in-law now became a mother-in-law. As mother-in-law, she could see that her daughter-in-law, being an inexperienced girl, was doing several undesirable things. She, therefore, began to disapprove of her actions. This girl bided her time and when she knew that her husband was completely in her power, she turned insolent. When the mother-in-law again rebuked her, she gave a slap on her face. It was then that she cried, "O, my mother-in-law! O, my mother-in-law!" So saying she left the house of her daughter-in-law and ran to the house of her mother-in-law, fell at her feet and apologized to her, saying, "Mother, I have been paid back with compound interest. It is now that the understanding has dawned on me

that you were in the right and I was in the wrong." Thereafter, she began to live with her old mother-in-law. Whatever money she had of her own, she placed it at the feet of her aged mother-in-law.

Now, if the understanding had come to this lady before she was paid in the same coin by her daughter-in-law, she could have spared her mother-in-law years of misery. Lack of understanding and lack of charity are responsible for a lot of our miseries.

A STUDENT.—Sir, this is a very instructive story.

TEACHER.—In the same way, we find that grown up sons don't understand their aged fathers. Fathers are rich in experience, though the sons may be rich in knowledge. To a father his son is a son whatever may be his age or position in life. But a son cannot realize it. He thinks that his father is unnecessarily passing through anxiety for him. There is a story of a labourer who was building his house. It was a hot summer day and the sun was shining very hot. It was time for the labourer to come down, take a bath and take his meals. His old father appealed to him to do so, for he was getting nervous about him. From the top of the house the labourer said, "Old man, don't unnecessarily worry yourself for me." The father naturally felt hurt. He silently went inside and brought with him his grandson, aged about three or four years, and made him to stand in the scorching heat. When the labourer saw his own son exposed to heat, he gave an angry howl and said, "Father, take him in. My child will fall ill." The father replied, "I am not going to take your son in unless you take my son also in." The labourer gave an understanding laugh, at once came down and fell at his father's feet. This is how understanding came to him. If it had come to him earlier, he would have saved his father the worry, the insult, and the unpleasant task of exposing his grandson to the heat of the sun. So you can see, boys, how lack of understanding several times makes us uncharitable.

A STUDENT.—True.

TEACHER.—It is the same lack of understanding and the same lack of charity which is responsible for the malady of acute intolerance which has corrupted our public life. One day I was travelling by train where I found some Muslim passengers



exchanging hot words with some other Muslims of a new cult. I naturally asked those people why they cherished ill feelings against the followers of the new cult. They said that the founder of the new cult claimed to be a prophet when, according to their creed, their prophet was the last of all the prophets and no new prophet was to come. I said, "What harm is there if these devout followers believe their founder to be a prophet? At the most you need not believe in him but why persecute his disciples?" They said, "They are *kaffirs* and as such they deserve to be persecuted." I felt pained and I told them that they should remember that those who persecuted their prophet also honestly believed that he was not a prophet. They persecuted him and their prophet had to flee from his beloved Mecca. If any honest believer of your creed is justified in persecuting this new cult, the persecutors of Islam also were perfectly justified. My friends retorted, "They were not! Theirs was not the religion of Allah. Ours is the religion of Allah." I then told them, "My dear friends, the followers of the new cult also believe their religion to be the religion of Allah. If you both cannot tolerate each other by understanding and charity, the result will be disastrous and you people will suffer the most."

A STUDENT.—Sir, this is true.

TEACHER.—In order to be tolerant one has to possess a large heart for understanding and charity. If I have a right to my own faith, everyone else has got the same right to his faith provided we are all honest. If we believe any other cult to be false, the best method is a rational and impersonal exposition of the doctrine in the light of facts and laws of Nature. If we lack understanding and charity, we have millions of excuses to fight and tear one another to pieces. Most of us differ in dress. If we become non-understanding and un-charitable about one another's dress, we shall criticize one another, ridicule one another and hate one another. We differ in language and if we begin to mock at one another by certain peculiarities of language, not making any allowance for the fact that every language possesses certain things not agreeable to others, we shall grow intolerant. We differ in names. Some people in Madras have names which we cannot pronounce. There are certain names in other states which do not sound pleasant to

our cars. If we lack in understanding and charity, we shall grow intolerant on every such matter. In the same way, there are any number of sects and cults in India. If we do not try to understand one another and extend charity, the result will be that peace will be destroyed and we shall never see that solidarity of national life which is the dream of India. To what is our ill-treatment of the class of untouchables due ? It is due to our lack of understanding and charity. Because a man happens to be born in an untouchable home, he is howled down as if he were a contagious leper. In the very beginning when I started this college, I had a few boys in the Boarding House. One day when I returned from outside, I found the college sweepress standing with some jars at a place away from the well. I asked her why she was there. She said, "Sir, I am here for the last two hours. I am thirsty, my husband is thirsty and my child is thirsty. I asked the college students to give me water, as they don't permit me to draw water from the well. But they have not done so." I was shocked. I told her, "Please go to your house. It is my business to fetch water for you." I went to the well and began to fill her jars. I was about to take the filled jars to the sweeper's house when the students saw me. They came running. They said, "Sir, we are going to take the jars to the sweeper's house." But I took them myself and thereafter such a painful episode was never repeated.

Is this not want of understanding and lack of charity which makes us so inhuman ? We do not understand that the sweeper feels pained when he is thirsty and if, therefore, we deny even water to him, it is because we lack charity.

In the same way there is a true story of a young man belonging to an untouchable class who had won the highest honours in a foreign university and who was posted by a Maharaja as an officer in his Secretariat. He had as his subordinates many persons who belonged to higher castes. It is surprising that even as subordinates when they used to bring papers to him, they used to throw them at his table from a distance. They would not step on the carpet of the office, because it was touched by the untouchable officer. The Maharaja threatened to punish all those people who behaved like this. The question of bread brought some of them to their senses but their general attitude was full of so much misunderstanding and it was so

uncharitable that the officer had ultimately to resign his post. Those castemen could not understand that their untouchable officer had the same feelings as they had and had the same zealous regard for his honour as they had. This lack of understanding makes us prove inhuman in relation to others.

Whenever, therefore, we find intolerance and inhumanity based upon lack of understanding and lack of charity, we come to realize how essential it is to develop this necessary attitude of mind.

The persons who have developed these two virtues in them have proved eminently successful in their life and dealings and so have become immortal social reformers.

A STUDENT.—Sir, we understand that it is the absence of understanding and charity that makes all our relations hellish. Please illustrate how the presence of these virtues have proved in everyday life wholesome and successful.

TEACHER.—The spirit of understanding has made many persons to prove a great boon. I know of a Parsi judge who recently passed away. He held the position of a Sessions Judge and tried any number of murder cases but throughout his career he never sentenced a man to death. He had a wonderfully understanding heart. He could realize that the death of the accused would prove for his relations as painful as the murder of the victim had been to *his* relations. He also realized in several cases that though circumstantial evidence was no doubt very strong yet there was a possibility of the man being innocent. Anyway his understanding heart could not condemn a human being to death. He was known to be a perfect saint.

There is a story of a Christian missionary which in some respects may not perhaps appeal to you much. His house was always open to every weary traveller or outcaste. A convict who was newly released from a jail, finding no shelter anywhere, went into the house of this missionary. This missionary at once found that the man had been recently released from the jail and was bitter. He wanted to sweeten his life. He, therefore, served him at his table in silver utensils. He knew that the convict, in view of his extreme poverty, would steal his costly utensils. But even then he deliberately placed them within the convict's reach. The convict did steal half of them and ran away during the late hours of the night, but he was

arrested and brought before the missionary. The missionary at once came forward and said, "I had placed my silver utensils within his reach to enable him to take them away. I am sorry he has taken half of them; he should have taken them all." So saying he brought the remaining utensils from within and gave them to him. This convict, as the story goes, was changed for life and became one of the greatest philanthropists of his time. Understanding and charity have a magic effect in changing the career of lost souls.

A STUDENT.—Was the missionary justified in screening an offender and criminal ?

TEACHER.—This indeed is a debatable point. There are persons who believe that prison life and punishment breed in the convicts very strong anti-social complexes and they therefore prefer to apply on the heart of a convict an ointment of kindness and mercy. In this case at least the missionary's understanding heart led him to apply the ointment to the convict's heart and it proved efficacious, as he changed from an anti-social being into a great servant of humanity. Besides this, Christian missionaries know a story from the Bible which is not without a good lesson. It is said that a woman had committed adultery in Jesus Christ's time. The penalty for adultery in the case of a woman was that she must be stoned to death. When the complaint was made to Jesus Christ, he asked his followers to bring the woman and make her stand in a central position in an open yard. He then asked all his followers and others, to have one stone each in his hand in order to pelt at the woman. When all were ready, Jesus Christ is alleged to have said: "Let him strike who is himself sinless" and none dared to strike. This was a lesson in charity. The spirit of charity in judging a man demands from us the disposition to be less harsh and more sympathetic in relation to a weak or fallen man, because we are ourselves liable to fall under similar temptations.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly give us a real instance of such an understanding or charity having flashed upon the heart of a person on the basis of his own awakening to his weakness ?

TEACHER.—I came across such a case which is completely true. There was a very strong character, a chaste woman, who had very little attraction for sex-life but who was a great

public servant. She was married to a decent man whom she tried to utilize in her public work and mostly denied to him conjugal rights. This man was otherwise a very decent man but his sex-starved life one day exposed him to a temptation at the hands of a wily woman. He was ashamed of his fall and he went and confessed it to his wife. The wife, whose standard of chastity was very high, got simply disgusted with him and left his roof. The husband appealed to her very much but she would not relent. The wife went and lived with her parents. After one or two years, she began to feel lonely and began to mix in social circles. She wanted sympathy and therefore naturally she began to give way to the influences of a respectable young man who was attracted towards her. The lady did not realize that she was heading for a fall. This mutual attraction between the two made her so weak that once she let the man embrace her. She was fortunate to get a shock and her entire conduct as a severe judge of her husband's fall loomed large before her. She pushed that man away and left her father's house by the next train and without any previous intimation she entered her husband's house. This gentleman who longed for her return, accorded her a very warm welcome, but she fell at his feet and began to weep saying, "I judged you harshly. I wanted you to come up to the ideal up to which even I could not come. I have realized your weakness by my own weakness. I, therefore, offer you my heartfelt apologies and it shall be very kind of you if you extend to me the same love that you had for me before." This is how sometimes we begin to grow charitable to others by realizing our own weaknesses. *Sympathy for the fallen, charity to the down-trodden and understanding of human weaknesses and failings are essential for making us more of human beings and less of stern masters.*

A STUDENT.—Sir, but how to develop understanding and charity ?

TEACHER.—In order to cultivate them we must get the light which can reveal to us our failings and weaknesses, our own lapses and failures, and that will make us humble. We must also get light to realize that a sinner is a suffering soul and a criminal is a diseased soul and, therefore, all that they need is vast sympathy to nurse their souls out of the diseases. Unless this light makes us humble and sympathetic, we will neither be

understanding nor charitable in our judgments on others. We, therefore, are very much in need of this unique light and also the unique power which constitute the wonderful atmosphere which prevails in our society and of which we want the world to have personal experience. This unique atmosphere is not the exclusive property of the members of our society. It is meant for the world and we wish the world to benefit by it.

## OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS ANIMALS—I

TEACHER.—Boys, I want to talk to you to-day on our attitude towards animals. You know I am a strict vegetarian. My feelings towards meat-eating are well-known to you. My society does not allow the use of flesh in any of its institutions. Sometimes you may be wondering why we prohibit its use in our institutions. You have a right to know this and therefore, I want to speak to you on this subject.

A STUDENT.—Sir, are not animals made for the use of man ?

TEACHER.—The question that you have put, my boy, needs some thinking. There are persons who believe that animals are made for the benefit of man. There have been philosophers also who have taught that animals are machines and that they have no soul. The followers of such philosophers used to beat the animals mercilessly ; and if these poor wounded animals cried in agony they used to laugh and say : “Oh, how the machine breaks!” Besides these people, there are others who sincerely believe that animals are made only for the use of man and, therefore, they have no claim to existence in their own right. There was a boy who one day told me, “Sir, animals are made for us. If we do not slaughter and eat them, they will haul us before God and accuse us that we failed to do our duty towards them. By slaughtering and eating them, therefore, we are paving a way for them to go to heaven.” Those persons who have this mentality are bound to slaughter the innocent animals and to eat them, but the question is: Are the animals made for man ? They are not. There was a time when several nationalities considered negroes to be made for them and, therefore, they made them slaves. They treated them as if they were soul-less animals or property. In course of time merciful people, with imagination enough to understand the miseries of the slaves, appeared and they raised their voice. Their voice, though feeble in the beginning, gathered force with time till at last it became a thunder and humanity could no longer ignore it. The result was that crores of slaves were given freedom.

Slavery has been made a crime. The time has come when the feeble voice in defence of animals is gathering force and even theists are raising a great protest against it.

A STUDENT.—Will you give us a protest of any such theist whose religion sanctions flesh-taking ?

TEACHER.—Fortunately, I have come across an article by Rev. Dr. R. Dean in *The Parel Church Messenger* which was quoted in *The Bombay Sentinel*. The heading of this article is : "Animals are God's other children". In the course of that article, he says :—

"Animals are our lower relations. They are born of the same mother. They are loved by the same Heavenly Father. They have the same instincts and the same feelings as we have. It is only sheer lack of imagination, the quality of living through another's experience, that can explain a man's failing to see the truth of this appalling offence to all that is best in us. It is a hideous distortion of human nature which makes these offences (of cruelty to animals) possible".

In these lines, the Rev. R. Dean explodes the fiction that animals have no souls and that they are made for man. At another place, he says :—

"Domesticated animals are the friends and servants of man. They are responsive, reliable and faithful. They are often affectionate. They work for us and live with us as companions and guides. They provide us with healthy sports, exercise and amusement. Most animals are lovely and lovable. They are all interesting. . . . . We are trustees to God for them, and they are his other children. It is high time that we realize how this trust is dishonoured".

Here is a different point of view which a theist has put before his Christian readers. Instead of considering animals as made for our food, he considers them as a trust of man, which trust man has not faithfully discharged, and how could he, when he believes the animals as soul-less machines or as contemptible beings which have to be butchered and whose flesh is to serve as a daily dish on his table. Rev. Dean calls them as good children of his God as human beings are. He believes them to be possessed of the same feelings and instincts as we possess and therefore, in the concluding paragraph of that article, he says :—



"I would make it a punishable offence to neglect any animal or to ill-treat it in any way. I would abolish the present method of carrying live poultry. I would prohibit the practice of driving a blind-folded bullock round a pestle in a little room whilst the poor creature's sides are scraping the confining walls. I would stop the torturing of the pigs in *Bandra*. In these and a thousand other ways, our Church people can help."

To those who believe that animals are made for our food, he says :

"I do not believe that animals were intended for us to eat any more than I believe that men should consider it necessary to eat each other".

I have quoted all these paragraphs to give such a theist's point of view of what our attitude should be towards animals whose religion does sanction flesh eating.

A STUDENT.—Sir, what do you believe ?

TEACHER.—I believe that animals are our friends and relations. I believe that man has evolved out of the mammalian stock of animals. We are, therefore, connected with animals in a geneological table. As it is a high crime to kill a man, so we consider it a high crime to kill useful and innocent animals either for our food or for our sport or for our amusement or for the purposes of our trade, etc. As we have evolved out of the animal stock, we consider that we have *no right* to kill these animals for food, etc. So far as the nourishment of our body is concerned, we find every possible thing in the vegetable world. The higher animals or birds whom we kill for food or sport possess many instincts and feelings similar to our own. By butchering them we are causing a lot of terrible misery that hardens our souls. And I believe that those who are accustomed to kill animals mercilessly, will have no compunction in killing men, too. The feeling which can ignore so much animal suffering, can very well afford to ignore human suffering also. I believe that one of the greatest causes of war is this cruel spirit of man which he has developed by the merciless slaughter of animals. Rev. R. Dean also has seen in some way the implications of our wanton cruelty towards animals. He says in the course of that article :

"We look apprehensively upon the political situation of the

world. We hope for peace and long for wealth and speak impatiently of social problems. What is the real cause of these things but the selfish and immoral conduct of man? How shall we hope for peace when human nature is so distorted as to allow these hideous atrocities to be perpetrated against our animal friends without revolt, without even the chivalrous desire to protect the weak against the strong?"

Many years ago when the First World War was raging, an American sounded the same note: "Those who can mercilessly slaughter millions of animals every day, and those who look at this horisble action without revolt, should never be surprised at the ease with which millions of human children are being butchered now". The butchering of animals leads to the butchering of men.

Such views are no doubt feeble voices but they are getting stronger and stronger and it is the duty of every young man to awaken this higher consciousness in himself.

A STUDENT.—Sir, I cannot understand how cruelty to animals will lead to cruelty to men.

TEACHER.—This is not difficult to understand. Cruelty is a feeling. It is not discriminating. Once it develops in man, it seeks gratification. The essence of cruelty is enjoying the sufferings of others or at least ignoring them. A man, who can enjoy the sufferings of animals, will not grieve at the sufferings of a man with whom he is not connected by any tender tie. Every evil force is a blind force. It victimizes persons with very little discrimination. It is well-known that a goldsmith, who is accustomed to stealing a piece for himself out of every piece of gold given to him for making ornaments, will not desist from stealing a piece out of the gold given to him even by his own mother for making an ornament for her. It is also well-known that a money-lender who is accustomed to charging high interest from others will not desist from charging the same rate of interest even from his brother. There was a rich man who once said that he used to give 6 per cent to all persons who invested their money with him; but when his own sister invested her money with him, he gave her less interest. He was accustomed to pay the interest to the minimum possible. In the case of his sister, he paid still less because he knew his sister would not complain. Every evil feeling, there-

fore, victimizes any and every person or being with as little discrimination as possible. It is an easy thing for a butcher to chop off the head of a man. He knows that the cow, when being slaughtered, gives out a wail of agony. But that has become sweet music for him. If anything can deter the butcher from killing a man, it can be the terror of the law but not the wail of agony of the murdered man. This is the reason why those who ignore animal sufferings can very well afford to ignore human suffering.

A STUDENT.—Sir, does not mercy to animals make cowards of us ?

TEACHER.—Mercy is a mighty force. In its full blossom it produces only heroes. Mercy cannot bear to injure but mercy also cannot bear to see injury being inflicted on another. Theodore Parker who felt mercy for the slaves, became the bravest man in the world. He fought against the largest combinations of wealth, industry, church and religion and official position but never did he quake. Before his voice of mercy quailed even the strongest hearts in the opponents' camp. It is true that he could not bear to see a slave in chains. You may call this weakness but he had enough strength to attempt to break the chains of all slaves even in the face of the mighty combinations. It is cruelty which makes man a coward. To kill a man or an animal is not the work of a hero. His business is to save others.

A STUDENT.—Sir, is it not true that vegetarianism among the Hindus has made them incapable of giving a fight to aggressors ?

TEACHER.—This is historically incorrect. Even when the Hindus went under, it was not vegetarianism which brought about their fall, but their lack of organization and unity was at the bottom. What broke the strength of India were the rivalries among the native princes and their selfishness. They had no national consciousness and no national pride. They fought for their selfish ends. They could, therefore, be easily purchased. Some of the ruling princes went over to the side of the aggressors because of the domestic rivalries or jealousies. Our princes could put in the field armies larger than those of the aggressors. But they went under the blow of the aggressor not because they lacked courage but because they lacked

unity. Flesh-eating cannot give us courage. Almost all those who fought against the aggressors were non-vegetarians. Meat diet can give us cruelty. It is to cruelty and selfishness that we owe the present terrible tension which might at any time end in a conflagration. It is feared that the new conflagration might prove the end of many a nation. What is, therefore, needed is not the development of cruelty and selfishness but the development of compassion and considerateness. We can develop these feelings by our attitude of sympathy and kindness to our animal friends. We have to realize that animals are our relations and friends. This is a fact which science has revealed to us. This is a fact which can no longer be denied and if we realize this fact, it will be impossible for us to behave as we are at present behaving towards animals. An animal is not intended to be our food or sport. It is intended to be our friend and helpmate.

A STUDENT.—Is there any other loss to us if we butcher and eat animals or hunt them or kill them for the purpose of trade ?

TEACHER.—By this attitude we become ungrateful. The feeling of gratitude is already rare in mankind. It is the absence of this feeling which has been the cause of so much misery in human relations. If we develop positive ingratitude, what will happen ? We will be a source of misery to those who are our benefactors.

A STUDENT.—Are animals our benefactors ?

TEACHER.—They are. It is these animals which have helped man from times immemorial. For example, the dog has been man's friend and companion from very early times. The bullock has ploughed his land, the cow has fed his children with milk from the time he settled down to agriculture. The goat and the sheep have not only provided him with milk but with its wool and skin also to cover his body. The horse has been his companion and faithful friend from the dawn of humanity. In the same way, he has been using, for riding purposes, the camel, the elephant, the donkey and the mule. Lots of birds have cheered him by their beautiful colours and music. In fact, they have been as much his companions as men. This service they have continued upto this day. For all this service they are being given only food and water, while man is making

millions out of them. In spite of all the service that man receives, he pays them in return, with their slaughter. He thus cannot but become ungrateful. Gratitude demands that man should be ready not only to feel indebted for any service received by him but to pay it back at least in the form of love. But if, instead of doing that, he pays his benefactors by killing them, he suffers immensely, he loses one of the crown jewels of his soul. Loss of gratitude is in fact the loss of humanity. Loss of gratitude makes a man even worse than an animal. How foolish then it is for man to destroy his compassion, his considerateness, his feelings of gratitude and humanity only for the sake of satisfying his perverted taste !

So much will do for to-day. We shall continue the lesson tomorrow.

## OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS ANIMALS—2

A STUDENT.—Sir, is it not true that those who take meat and live on animal diet are stronger than those who live on vegetarian diet? Are not Hindu Banias, who subsist on vegetarian food, an apt illustration of my point?

TEACHER.—It is not true that those who live on animal diet are physically stronger than those who live on vegetarian diet. The agriculturists, as a rule, rarely get animal diet. They get at the most bread, milk, butter and curd. But their physical work and open-air life make them very strong and stalwart. It is the profession of sitting at one place for hours, doing a lot of mental work, having no exercise and marrying early, which constitute the factors for the physical weakness of the Bania class.

Even if your assertions had been correct that animal diet makes a man strong, that is no ground for doing what is fundamentally wrong. My entire viewpoint is that man has no right to take animal food, that animals are friends and relations of man, especially domesticated animals; that the appalling misery which flesh-eaters cause by the slaughter of animals is all inhuman; that it brutalizes the feelings of man; and that Nature has not intended meat diet for man.

A STUDENT.—Sir, why do you think that Nature has not intended meat diet for man?

TEACHER.—The entire physiological make-up of man is unlike meat-eating animals and resembles vegetarian or fruitarian animals. You can have this illustrated in any of the books or primers of science which deal with this subject. Besides this, flesh food has been responsible for many diseases which are prevalent among meat-eaters.

A STUDENT.—Are any experiments made to illustrate the point that animal diet is not intended for man?

TEACHER.—Everyone of you can make an experiment. Let a man live only on meat diet and he will soon realize how his body records the vast damage done by it. The difficulty at

present is that meat-eaters take lots of fruits and vegetables, cereals and pulses, etc. Let them give up all vegetables, all fruits, all grains etc., and live only upon a meat diet of various kinds, they will find out whether meat diet is intended for man or not. Another experiment has been made. Millions of persons have lived only on vegetable diet and they have lived very healthy and sound lives. Besides this, some experiments have been made to prove the point that several diseases are peculiar to meat-eaters which are not found among the vegetarians.

A STUDENT.—Does meat diet only vitiate the body or does it produce any other harm also ?

TEACHER.—In the laboratory of Nature very great experiments have been made of vegetarian and meat diets. You will be surprised to know that the vegetarian animals are the only animals which are useful and serviceable to man. All the milk-giving animals are vegetarians. They are, as a rule, harmless. In no way are they less strong than the carnivorous animals. Elephants, buffaloes, camels and bullocks are not weaker in body than the lion, the tiger, the wolf etc. They differ from the meat-eating animals only in that the latter have to subsist upon their brother animals and therefore they become ferocious, cruel and man-eating. Even the meat-eating men and meat-eating ferocious beasts have no love lost between them. These very meat-eating men are busy in destroying these carnivorous animals and the time is not far when it shall be very difficult to get specimens of them even for a zoo. This is because ferocity and cruelty and man-eating nature of these animals are disastrous to the very existence of man. As meat diet makes these animals ferocious, cruel and man-eating, it cannot but produce the same effect on man. We know that every attempt is being made in mankind that we should all live at peace. How is peace possible when men develop ferocity, cruelty and man-eating temperament ? So when I say that Nature has not intended meat diet for man, I say so because the exclusive flesh food is bound to destroy the health of man, that mixed diet has produced maladies in his body which are only peculiar to flesh-eaters and that partial or exclusive animal diet produces in man the unsocial feelings of ferocity, cruelty and man-eating tendency which make him unfit to live at peace with his fellow

beings, and thus produce misery for him and for others.

A STUDENT.—Do some facts illustrate this point ?

TEACHER.—Yes. Go to a jail and study the statistics. You will find that there are hardly 1 per cent murderers who are vegetarians while 99 per cent among them belong to meat-eating class. Again, you will find that majority of dacoits, robbers and those guilty of violent deeds, belong to the classes which live on flesh diet. The crimes of abducting of women and children are also mostly committed by those living on meat diet. The criminal tribes as a rule subsist on this diet. I believe that if man were to develop compassion for animal life and live on vegetarian and fruit diet, he would have been free from the tendencies for committing violent deeds. Drinking also is mostly prevalent among the flesh-eating classes. This tendency to crime and licentiousness which man gets from meat diet is too horrible to contemplate and I believe that one of the factors which will lead to the golden age, is complete abstinence from flesh diet and strict adherence to the vegetarian food.

That is why in the Dev Samaj no person can be admitted even as a lowest grade member who does not pledge to refrain permanently from all kinds of meat diet and eggs and all forms of killing of animals for food, for sacrifice, for sport or for trade, etc. It is only in the rare case of self-defence that a member is permitted to defend himself against an attack on his life by an animal and if need be, to kill it. No member is permitted to serve meat diet to another or to trade in meat or directly or indirectly to use flesh or abet its use. This strictness is based on our conviction that man has no right to live on meat diet.

A STUDENT.—What is the meaning of the statement that we have no right to use meat diet ?

TEACHER.—I have already made it clear that we have evolved from the animal world and that animals are our dear relations. They stand with us much in the same way as human beings, so far as our feeling of sanctity for their life is concerned. As we have no right to eat human beings, so we have no right to eat animals. Besides this, I have told you that vegetarian diet is the only food intended for our subsistence and all kinds of nutritiously necessary ingredients for man are available



in it. In the face of these two great facts we enunciate the proposition that man has no right to live on animal flesh.

A STUDENT.—If animals are our dear relations or friends, we must owe certain obligations to them.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. In the Dev Samaj there is a fixed number of days specially reserved for our thoughtful reflection over our duties and obligations to the animal world. We are required to bring before our mind the innumerable services which we have received from the animal world and thus develop a feeling of gratitude towards them. Inspired by this gratitude, we are required to do some practical service to them. If we have been guilty of any crime against the animal world, we have to purify our hearts by bringing before our eyes the memory of our past sins, feel pain for them and make adequate reparation for them. We are asked to bring before our mind several virtues or higher qualities which have appeared in different beings of the animal world. By such spiritual exercises of appreciation, we are to develop respect for them. By looking at their beauty, especially in the feathered animals, we have to elevate our minds and develop a feeling of affection for them. In this way the entire period is spent in making our relation with animals tender, respectful and grateful.

A STUDENT.—Sir, I can understand why in the Dev Samaj institutions flesh food is not permitted.

TEACHER.—I shall be glad indeed if mankind were to understand our viewpoint towards the animal world. It is only then that they will realize how it offends us when the meat-eating friends insist upon us to permit students to use flesh in our hostel. We feel this request tantamounts to this that we should be prepared to accede to a request of a cannibal to use flesh of human beings on our own premises. We cannot force any man to be vegetarian but we have a right that they should also not force us to allow the use of flesh on our premises, when we consider slaughter of animals as truly a *murder*.

A STUDENT.—Sir, we do consider that it is not necessary for us to take meat diet, but when we return home we cannot resist the temptation of taking it.

TEACHER.—In the life of man the entire drama is enacted by his feelings. If a man develops a feeling of compassion, he is saved for ever and no amount of persuasion or force can

*bring about his fall. We have in our society a big Sardar who was a notorious hunter, flesh-eater, drunkard etc. The extent of the cruelty towards animals, of which he was guilty, can be measured from this that one day when during his hunt he shot a deer, a dispute arose between him and his Mohammedan servant as to how to dispose of the deer so that the flesh of the dead animal should be permissible for both of them according to their religious sanctions. The deer was not yet dead. The Muslim wanted to kill it according to his creed. This Sardar wanted to kill it by *jhatka*. Both of them therefore, hit upon a plan. The Sardar said that he would sever by a sword stroke two legs of the deer, while the Muslim should, by dagger, sever his neck to make it *halal* and this is how the poor deer was hacked to death. But after coming under the influence of the Dev Samaj, the feeling of compassion awakened in him a feeling of pain for what he had done towards animals in the past. It was a very elevating sight. For years together he has been serving animals. He has never allowed an animal or a bird to be shot in his estate. He even refused to permit a high executive officer to hunt on his lands. He never permitted the use of flesh food at any one of the marriages performed in his family and never allowed even bridegroom's party to use that kind of diet. This compassion of his became so well-known that nobody ever dared to make any request to him for the use of such diet. He became a friend of animals. By the conversion of this single Sardar, thousands of birds and animals were saved. These would have otherwise fallen victims to serve as food on his table or as an amusement for his hunting lust. By giving up meat diet he has come to no harm. He has lived a very long life and is even to-day radiating the influence of good example for the welfare of others. Through his contacts several other persons have given up meat-eating. It is idle to say that giving up of flesh food produces any physical weakness or any malady. Those hundreds and thousands of persons who have lived as Dev Samajists or who sympathize with the work of Dev Samaj and who have given up this cruel diet, prove by their lives that not only has no harm come to their bodies but as against that they have lived healthier and stronger lives. It is my firm conviction that millions of persons take flesh food not because they believe that it gives them strength but because*

they are slaves to their perverted palate. As men of wealth behave towards others dishonestly not because they *need money* but because they have to satisfy their greed, in the same way these meat-eaters misbehave towards the animals not because they get any benefit from this diet but because they have to satisfy the craving of their perverted palate. Man is a slave to his low desires. It is the desires which are his tyrants and which force him to gratify them. It is very seldom that a man is guided by the consideration of his bodily health and strength or by the consideration of character. A man who is a slave to a pleasure wants to enjoy it, even if he has to commit any amount of atrocities. Same is the psychology of a meat-eater, too.

## NATURE OF TRUE LIBERTY

A STUDENT.—Sir, we would wish you to give us a talk to-day on what constitutes true liberty and what constitutes false liberty or criminal licence.

TEACHER.—The word 'liberty' is very much in the air now-a-days but the way it is being abused is also horrible. Let me deal with the subject step by step.

For a boy or a girl or anybody who is dependent upon the head of a family, certain restraints are indispensable for the smooth working of the home. If we don't observe them we commit a crime against the peace of the family. There is a gentleman still alive—a distinguished M.A. and a public worker—who one day narrated an incident of his life. He said that when he was studying in a college, he was vainglorious because he was the top boy in his college and he was made much of. He carried this vanity to his own house. He used to come to his house very late after his evening stroll. One day his father, who was very much worried by his conduct, gave him an ultimatum that he should either return home before 9 p.m. or he should leave the house. The father, though very affectionate, was a very strong-minded man. This boy, as he personally told me, felt himself so very important that he thought he would be welcomed by every one of his friends and thus teach his father a lesson that he had no right to interfere with the movements of his son. With this sense of self-importance he left the house but was shocked to see that each and every one of his friends whom he visited gave him a cold reception when they came to know that he had left his father's house. It was dusk. He was hungry and tired. He was conscious that he had no roof to shelter his head anywhere in the world except in his own father's house. He, therefore, went back to his father and apologized to him. Had he persisted in his wrong conduct, he would have ruined his prospects. The sense of false liberty would have blighted his career.

But I know of another case where the boy was ruined. This boy was not behaving properly in the house. He was solely dependent upon his father who loved him. His kind father wanted him to observe the discipline of the home. But he refused and left his father's house. He is alive to-day and is a terrible example of the evil effects of false liberty of which certain boys become over-fond.

When a boy or a girl is dependent upon one's parents and is not able to take care of one's own self, it is highly desirable that he or she should consider moral restraints in the family as healthful and observe it as a sign of true liberty. True liberty, after all, consists in observance of all such physical and moral laws which promote one's physical and moral welfare.

A STUDENT.—Is it necessary, Sir, to observe these moral restraints in homes only so long as we are minors and dependent upon others?

TEACHER.—Moral restraints have to be observed by all, if we want to lead a disciplined life and promote domestic harmony. I know of a true case of a young bride who was reprimanded by her husband because she would go to other people's houses without his permission or talk with persons whom he considered very undesirable for her. He was an educated man holding the position of a clerk and she was an inexperienced and uneducated young girl. One day, the husband took her to task severely and perhaps beat her because she did not listen to his sensible advice. I call the husband's advice sensible, because that is what the woman herself felt years after she had left his house. When the husband had gone to court, a wicked man finding her in tears approached and advised her that it would be better for her if she went to her father's house in her husband's absence and thus taught him a lesson. The woman had been anxious to get rid of the control of her husband for some months and wanted to come back on her own terms. So she listened to the advice of that wicked man and left for her father's house. This man had other designs on her. He, therefore, took her to another province and there introduced her into a house of ill-fame. While following that profession she fell in love with a man and left for his house. That wicked man filed a case against the woman and I represented her. It was then that she narrated her whole story to me. She

had committed a folly in entrusting herself to a stranger in preference to her own husband. With a view to get freedom from him, she fell into the hands of a wolf, much in the same way as the lamb fell into the trap of a wolf who persuaded it to leave the protection of the fence to enjoy wonderful freedom. In the domestic economy the bread-winner has the largest voice and every member has certain restraints put on him. These restraints are mostly for the benefit of all, and if we chafe at these restraints and break them we break ourselves and the peace of the house.

A STUDENT.—Besides these domestic restraints, which are for our good, what other restraints are we to observe?

TEACHER.—There are several social conventions which are built on moral values. If we try to break loose of them with a view to get freedom, we shall have to suffer ourselves and also produce suffering for others. Marriage is a great social convention, it is perfectly a moral institution. If we try to destroy the obligations of the married life for any reason, then not only do we suffer but we make others also to suffer. I know of a case which came to my notice in the course of my profession as a pleader. A handsome woman aged about twenty-five had left her husband and a son under the lure of fascination for a young boy who was two or three years junior to her. The husband prosecuted that wicked young man. When the woman came to me I told her, "Just look here, young woman, you have without any cause left your husband and home and are living in adultery with a young man who is a vagabond and who has no ostensible means of living. You are breaking a very healthy social convention. This paramour of yours will not keep you long. Society rightly considers this kind of life as highly objectionable. There is no legal obligation on this young man to maintain you, nor is there any social obligation to compel him to do so. If he gets tired of you, you have no remedy against him in law or in *Panchayat*. If your husband were to leave you, the whole society will be with you. But if your paramour leaves you, you will be cast adrift on the uncertain currents of violent waters." She did not listen to me. The paramour was convicted. When he was released, he left her as was but expected. The kind of life that she lived thereafter is very tragic.

Every social convention is, therefore, not to be broken merely in the name of liberty. Society has developed several moral principles which it has embodied in its social conventions. It is unwisdom-like to break them in the name of liberty.

Not only must we consider marriage to be sacred but we must observe other social conventions also. The long experience of humanity has taught us that a young boy has no right to touch a young girl's person, so long as they are not connected by nearness of blood or by marriage. In our society it is considered wrong not only to touch a girl's body but even to talk with her in privacy. The convention is also based upon high moral feelings of purity. I have before this quoted a writer on the need of purity in relation to girls. That same writer somewhere says:

"Treat all girls as you would have others treat your sisters. It is wrong for a boy to seek—even however simple it may all seem—liberty with the body of a girl. The reason why I give this advice is because the taking of such liberties—the very touching of the girl's body—tends to create thoughts which are not good. Such acts serve to excite the boy, especially so far as his sexual organs are concerned. They excite the girl also, and if both are not careful they will find that they are doing other things, one step leading to another—until they will find that almost before they realize what they are doing, they are seeking to indulge in sexual intercourse. So because it is wrong, mind and body-destroying, I urge young men not to be free and easy with girls."

I generally find the young men taking strong objection to this restriction. They never realize that the freedom that they want in this respect is a voice of their sexual desires. They try to misinterpret this voice into the voice of liberty. I am sure that they would not let other boys take this same liberty with their own sisters, which they want for themselves in relation to others men's sisters. It is, therefore, very healthy for young men of normally good and respectable families to put this question to themselves: "Can I permit my sister or mother or wife to let other men take the liberties with them which I want to enjoy in relation to the women of others?"

It is a social convention that we must respect the sex, the age, the sick and the dead. If we break these social conven-

tions in the name of liberty saying: "What do I care for all these things!", we shall be proving ourselves vulgar. After all vulgarity is born of the conduct of those who lack in this feeling of respect and sacredness. Our true liberty, therefore, consists in being able to conform to all these social conventions based upon morality.

A STUDENT.—What are other restrictions which are moral and which we must observe and not violate in the name of false liberty?

TEACHER.—There are several legal obligations which are based upon very sound moral principles. One of them is that we must not take the law into our own hands. It is sad that Indian mind has not been able to realize the value of it. Even Congressmen who are reputed to take the most leading part in getting political freedom for India, very often violate this great legal convention. Mahatma Gandhi, the supreme head of the Congress, has written a very thought-provoking article in *The Harijan*, dated the 17th September, 1938, which amply corroborates my view that in the name of liberty, even the best conventions are being broken. Mahatma Gandhi writes:

"The saddest case to come under my observation is that of a Congress Committee having incited the ryots of a zamindar simply to take possession of the lands of that zamindar. This act of spoliation was preceded by speeches of Congressmen reeking with violence. I sent the papers to Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya for investigation. He confirms generally the complaints made by my correspondent. I am holding that the District or the Provincial Congress Committee will be able to right the wrong. Failing that of course, Rajaji's Government has to give redress. In saying this I do not wish to suggest that the land does not belong to the worker on it. I endorse the socialist theory of possession. But no socialist that I know has defended the usurpation practised in Andhra. If all the land in India is ever to belong to or be possessed by the worker alone, it would be either by a bloody revolution or by equitable legislation. It must be clear to every sane man that act of confiscation will never last. Had it not been for the Congress Government, the spoliation would never have taken place. The Congress Government will dig its grave if it fails to restore the land to the legal possessor. I may add in parenthesis that



the dispossessed zamindar is reputed to be a docile man with pro-Congress tendencies."

Here Mahatma Gandhi has made it clear that to take the law into one's own hand is a bad principle and is liable to lead to violence and bloody revolution. Those, therefore, who try in the name of liberty to break any and every good law are guilty of criminal licence. But this is not the only case which Mahatma Gandhi has quoted about the mentality of Congressmen and women. He says further on:

"The singularity of the U.P. cuttings (which were sent to him—*Author.*) is that they contain incitement to violence in poems and prose. A lady writer waxes eloquent over the misdeeds of the zamindars and the wrongs of the *kisans*. She draws a terrible contrast between the opulence of the haves and the penury of the have-nots. Having prepared the grounds, she invites the *kisans* to a feast of blood and thunder: 'Take any weapon you get hold of, strike and strike hard. Don't be cowards. It is all yours and you must seize it by your powerful arms.' This is a mild rendering, all too brief, of the red original. Had not the lady's name stared in the face as the writer, I would not have thought a daughter of India to be capable of incitement to such merciless violence. I must confess that even if I screwed myself up properly, I could not fill the three columns that she has done with incentive. If no one has had his head turned by the writing, it is certainly not her fault. Fortunately, the millions, to whom it is addressed cannot read."

At another place Mahatma Gandhi is right when he says:

"But this is not civil liberty. It is criminal licence. Swaraj will not come by way of falsehood and violence."

Therefore, it is not the true liberty to behave as one likes to behave in domestic, social or legal relations. Everywhere it is a criminal licence to break the conventions based upon human experience as salutary and moral.

A STUDENT.—What is meant by true liberty ?

TEACHER.—True liberty consists in being able to conform to all such conventions and laws and to all such habits and modes of life which are calculated not only to promote our own physical and moral welfare but the welfare of all others also with whom we are bound by some ties. That man is truly free who obeys the domestic, social and legal conventions without

any goading or coercion. He is truly free who is able to resist all such habits and modes of life which are positively harmful to one's body and soul. If I over-eat, I have lost freedom to that extent. If instead of confining myself to healthy drinks like pure water and pure milk, I form a habit of drinking wine, I have lost my freedom. If I am not able to get up from my bed to study or to work when I ought to do so, I have lost my liberty. If I find any evil social custom and am not able to resist it or break it, I am not free. Suppose, I have a daughter and under the pressure of evil social custom, I get her married, when she is still a child, I have lost my freedom. When I spend money on marriages and deaths, beyond my means, just to please my community and thus impoverish my self, I have lost my freedom. If I consider flesh eating to be a vice and yet make a grand arrangement of animal diet for big officials, because I have some selfish interests and have therefore to please them, I have lost my freedom. If I know that I am weak and I should not marry and yet I marry because of the predominance of sexual desire or just to please society, I have lost my freedom. If I take bribes and therefore do something which, besides being immoral, is also illegal, I have lost my freedom. If I feel a strong urge to harm some man who has done me no harm but has simply stated a truth which is unpleasant to me and led by that urge I think out ways and means of harming him, I have lost my freedom. Thus a slave to taste, to name, to fame, to false and injurious social opinion, to wealth, to property, to sexual desire, to idleness, etc., loses his freedom. Whatever, therefore, he does against the true physical, social and moral laws of Nature in order to gratify these low loves, shows his criminal licence and not a sense of true liberty.

A STUDENT.—Sir, I have several other questions to put. Should I ask them now ?

TEACHER.—We shall deal with them to-morrow.

## TRUE LIBERTY AND MORAL ORGANIZATION

A STUDENT.—If you permit, Sir, I wish to ask a direct question about your society.

TEACHER.—You are most welcome to do so.

A STUDENT.—Sir, no one is permitted to join your society even if he desires, unless he pledges to refrain permanently from eight specified sins. Is it not interfering too much in the private life of man and does it not mean too much sacrifice of one's individual liberty ?

TEACHER.—Before I reply to this question, you are to bear in mind certain things. In the first place, the Dev Samaj is a *voluntary association*. It is not a compulsory organization like the State. One is free to join it or not. But once he joins it, he has to follow the rules and regulations of the Society. There is no force or compulsion for him to remain in the Society against his will. He is always at liberty to join and leave it at his will. This being the case, there is no question of depriving any man of his so-called liberty.

In the second place, you have to bear in mind that man, too, is a part of Nature. Being a part of Nature and subject to its laws, he cannot be absolutely independent. The absolute independence from Nature spells utter extinction. As man is bound up with Nature, he has to realize that his existence in it is dependent upon the fulfilment of certain laws or conditions regulating his life. It is not possible for him to free himself from the control of these conditions. If he does not fulfil the conditions governing his life, he exposes himself to danger. If he wants to steer clear of the path leading unto death, he has to harmonize his relations or adjust his life with life-promoting conditions. Hence those, who dream of absolute independence or absolute freedom are living in a fool's paradise.

The third point that you have to bear in mind is about the philosophy of the Dev Samaj. The Dev Samaj teaches that as man is a part of Nature, he has to get rid of those feelings which lead him to injure the form, the function and the existence

of the various kingdoms of Nature and of the component parts of those kingdoms. Furthermore, he has to develop those feelings which help him to promote the evolution of the form, the function and the existence of the various kingdoms of Nature and the beings composing them. *In short by building others we build ourselves and by harming others we harm ourselves.* Such being the philosophy of the Dev Samaj, it has to mould man's life accordingly. It, therefore, starts with liberating man from such of the actions which are positively harmful to him and to others, and gradually lead him on to the ways to greater purity and greater service.

I hope you understand these three points.

A STUDENT.—Yes, Sir.

TEACHER.—Now let us take all the eight sins and crimes which every member of the Dev Samaj has to renounce, one by one.

The first pledge that he has to take is that he shall neither himself take, nor give, nor cause to be given to others, any intoxicant such as wine, opium, *bharg*, tobacco, *charas*, *chand*, cocaine, etc., *for the purpose of intoxication.*

Now, none of these intoxicants constitutes the food of man. They are poisons. Their use as intoxicants has brought about the ruin of millions of persons. If a man does not know how to protect himself and is led by his low love of bodily pleasure to take them, he is a perfect slave. He has lost the ability to protect himself against what constitutes a positive danger to his health and life. By enabling him to protect himself against a positive evil, the Dev Samaj is doing indeed a great service to him. A man who takes this pledge and fulfils it in his daily life becomes a free soul to that extent and not a slave. In fact, *capability to conform to the laws of life constitutes true liberty for man.*

Let me take the second pledge. It says one shall neither himself eat nor give, nor cause to be given to others for eating, flesh or eggs or anything made therefrom.

In my lesson entitled "Our Attitude Towards Animals", I have explained that man has no right to kill an animal for the purpose of eating its flesh. If a man has no right to a thing but is led by his slavery of palate to trespass upon that right and to commit a serious wrong, he not only harms the animals

but also harms himself. Any feeling which makes us ignore the rights of others and even trample upon them is a base feeling. The dignity of man as man consists in realizing what is right and what is wrong. If he fails to develop this discrimination, he forfeits his privilege as man. But if he indulges in what is positively wrong, he falls shamefully low. In fact, by liberating a man from this sin and enabling him not only to renounce it but to permanently pledge against it, the Dev Samaj restores him to his dignity as a man. It also saves him from a further hardening of his heart which necessarily follows from wanton killing of animals for the purpose food. It develops a feeling of compassion in him. This feeling of compassion makes the life of man adjusted to evolutionary laws of Nature. It is hard-heartedness or cruelty which is the cause of man's inhumanity towards animals. You can, therefore, see the service that the Dev Samaj does to a man when it liberates him from the use of flesh and eggs as food.

The third pledge that the man has to take is that he shall not gamble nor be helpful to others in such an act.

Here also you can see what the Dev Samaj aims at. A gambler is a person who wants to get rich without labour. A gambler loses faith in honest exertion and honest work. This is the greatest harm that he does to himself. Any progress in character building which a man can make lies through the road of hard and honest labour. Besides this, gambling leads to many other vices, which are the direct result of a do-nothing life. By liberating a man from this vice, the Dev Samaj confers a boon on him and there are instances in the Society of persons who have realized this boon. I know of several instances, one of which offers itself to my mind just now. There is an agriculturist who inherited a lot of landed property from his father. To his great misfortune he fell in the company of gamblers. On the one hand he could not attend to his land and on the other his losses in gambling proved a great drain on him. The result was that most of his property was lost. The rest would have gone the same way had he not happened to come under the influence of the Dev Samaj and thus be saved from his wrong past. Fortunately, from the time of his advent into the Dev Samaj, his whole destiny has changed. By hard work and economic habits, he has not only retrieved his lost

property but has also added a good lot to it. His entire family which was going to rack and ruin has thus been saved. The members of his family have received very good education. Thus a new life and a new spirit have come to rule the family. This is called doing real service to man and this is called true liberty.

The fourth pledge that he has to take is that he shall not steal anything nor help others in committing theft.

This is too well-known a crime to need any elucidation at my hands. I give you only one interesting instance of a man who entered a Dev Samaj temple with a view to steal the shoes of the devotees, lying outside. At that time a great worker of the Dev Samaj was delivering a sermon. This thief began to hear it and he was so much changed that he went away without doing any mischief. He continued attending the meetings without the worker's knowing that he had been converted. It was after some days that he stood up and revealed the whole thing. This man gradually came to be the master of large landed property and a lot of cash money because instead of depending on theft and thus having something without honest work, he depended on honest labour and economic habits. So from a thief he became a *zamindar*.

The fifth pledge that he has to take is that he shall not take bribes in the performance of his legitimate duties.

By taking bribes man degrades himself very much. He takes full advantage of his position and power to get from people what does not rightfully belong to him and often coerces them in case they are reluctant to satisfy his illegitimate demands. Here instead of honestly serving the public, he has a desire to loot them. This is shameful conduct and only persons bereft of all sense of self-respect and honesty can demean themselves to it.

A STUDENT.—What should a man do, Sir, if he has a large family and a low salary ?

TEACHER.—He must do only the one honest thing of living within his means. His low salary is no justification for committing a crime. In fact those who take bribes do not necessarily do so because their salary is not enough to maintain them. They do so because they are greedy. A Sessions Judge who draws eighteen hundred rupees a month should not

have any reason to take bribes but it is a fact that several Judges do so. An Executive Engineer who draws eight hundred or a thousand or more has no reason to complain of a low salary and yet when he takes bribes it is clear that he does so because he is greedy and not because he is needy.

A STUDENT.—Sir, I refer only to cases of those who are in fact needy.

TEACHER.—The word 'needy' also is a relative term. If a man knows that he has to get Rs. 20 a month and nothing more, he has to regulate his needs within that amount. But if he has a chance of taking bribes, his needs also increase. He wants money to satisfy his growing needs which are unnecessary. Let me give you a true story. There is a man still alive, who is a clerk drawing Rs. 60. He used to take bribes. I was anxious that he should give up that bad habit. I did not succeed then. But at some other time it so happened that he determined to give up bribes-taking. I met him two months after he had given up that habit. I asked him how he was feeling. To my great surprise he said, "I am feeling much happier now. I am having a real sound sleep now. When I used to take bribes my condition was this : I would not go even two furlongs on foot but would call a carriage and pay four annas or eight annas as was demanded. This was not necessary. I know that I used to buy dresses which I did not need. Though I had already a dozen trousers yet when I saw a very costly and a new kind of cloth come to market, I went in for it. I spent Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 per month to get new trousers and new shirts. Many things I went in for were not necessary. Besides this, every day I had to come in conflict with those who would not give me bribes at my demands. When I went to bed my head was full of schemes as to how to make this or that man pay more. When I got up in the morning, the same thoughts haunted me. Now I am free from all those hauntings, all those frictions and all those exaggerated demands of lower desires which troubled me before."

A STUDENT.—There are persons who have a debt to pay. The debtors are troubling them. What should they do if they do not take bribes ?

TEACHER.—This is also one of the delusions in which man indulges. I know of a true instance of a Station Master who

used to draw Rs. 60 and got about a hundred rupees in bribes. His health was completely broken down and his debt was increasing. On coming to the society of the Dev Samaj, he was converted and so he gave up the bribes. You will be surprised to know and this is an absolute truth, that not only did the health of the man improve but he was also able to pay off his debt from his salary and thus within a year or two he became free of all his debts and his heart began to sing a song of health and happiness. It was this man who told me that when he used to take bribes, he was so very much given to taking dainty dishes and that also at odd times that he did not know how to control his palate. He had no thought for his money and so a greater part of his earnings was wasted. But when he was changed, he not only got freedom from the tyranny of his palate and extravagant habits but he became very economical. This economy not only improved his own and his wife's health but enabled them to save a greater portion of his salary which they regularly paid towards discharging their debt. I can never forget his example. In Dev Samaj, several such changes have taken place and therefore the arguments advanced by you don't appeal to me. It is better to live with honour on bare bread and water than to live in luxuries with all honour, all humanity and all self-respect lost.

A STUDENT.—According to you, therefore, Sir, bribes-taking is to be eschewed under all circumstances and in all cases.

TEACHER.—Yes. What is wrong is wrong. It cannot become right under any circumstances. As I have told you that man has no right to kill animals for food, etc. in the same way, he has no right to take bribes. Use of an intoxicant for the purpose of medicine is permissible but use of animal diet and taking of bribes, are not permissible under any circumstances.

A STUDENT.—What is the sixth pledge, Sir, which every member has to take?

TEACHER.—The sixth pledge which every candidate to the membership of the Dev Samaj is to take, is that one would not suppress debts and deposits; nor any donation promised to a good cause nor payment of the price for anything purchased from anybody.

This has reference to monetary and such other dealings which a man has to enter into with his fellow human beings.



When a man suppresses deposits, he commits a breach of trust. He becomes false and dishonourable to his own dignity as man and to those who trusted him. In the same way, a man who suppresses the payment of debt when he can afford to pay it becomes a cheat and a mean coward. Again, a man who would not pay the price for the thing purchased is a base person and he who would not pay the donation promised by him to a good cause when he has money to pay, proves false and perfidious. In all these cases the conduct of the man becomes dishonourable and mean, base and cowardly. Those who are anxious to produce a higher type of man cannot afford to let these base inclinations degrade him. This is why the Dev Samaj wants its members to be true, honourable and fair in dealings with others. I hope you can realize that a man who can get out of this kind of crime or sin, gains in honour and gains in humanity.

A STUDENT.—Indeed, Sir. It is very interesting to hear what lies behind these pledges. What is the seventh pledge, Sir?

TEACHER.—The seventh pledge that one has to take is that he or she shall never commit adultery or help others in doing so or re-marry in the life-time of the wedded partner.

By this pledge, the Dev Samaj enables a person to maintain an attitude of purity towards the opposite sex. One of the most degrading things that is eating into the vitality of mankind is the base attitude in the matters of sex. Society allows a party to marry. The object of marriage is a loyal and faithful partnership with the purpose of having a family and children. This loyalty and faithfulness is utterly destroyed when he or she becomes adulterous. Adultery gives one an impure outlook on life. One does not consider the other sex as an object of respect but considers it an object of gratification of lust. So long as this attitude is not changed, man and woman cannot establish an attitude of mutual respect, mutual regard, mutual protection of each other's honour, and a spirit of loyalty. No marriage can be stable and true which is contaminated by disloyalty in the wedlock. The second part of the pledge teaches us to be true to our wedded partner even under extreme circumstances, i.e., when one is barren or permanently invaild, etc. Thus this pledge does not only elevate the personal life of the individual and the dignity of the married life but it enables one to maintain an attitude of true respect and purity

in relation to the whole opposite sex. This is the principle behind that pledge.

A STUDENT.—I can understand, Sir, that a married man has no right to think of another woman in terms of sexual desire or to establish a sexual relation with any other woman, save his wife, but what about a man who has no wife ?

TEACHER.—Sexual relation with any person outside wedlock is called adultery. It offends against not only moral principles but even the higher social code. If you permit a man without a wife, to have an illegitimate relation with a woman you make him a sort of menace to the purity of homes. This man, after all, shall have to think of some other man's wife, daughter, mother or sister. By such an act he would not only wound the right susceptibilities of her relations but will degrade himself, too. In married life if one has rights he has obligations, too, but an adulterer has no obligations. If a girl becomes pregnant, he is not bound to maintain the child. He is also not bound to maintain her. He is also not bound to protect her. He is also not bound to give her conjugal rights and he has no obligation to remain loyal and faithful to her. Such a person is rightly a beast. And if the law of society and principles of higher religion have set their face against the conduct of such a man, they are fully justified.

A STUDENT.—Suppose a person goes to a questionable house where unfortunate women live. Does he commit any crime or sin?

TEACHER.—Yes. He commits a grievous sin. He becomes a party to brutalize a woman. There is no creature so lost to the dignity of womanhood as a prostitute. She is not loyal to anybody. She becomes faithless when she follows the profession. She owes no obligation to the men who visit her except that of selling her honour to them for the time being. She utilizes her sex for producing as many disloyal persons as possible. If we can believe that loyalty and faithfulness, purity and nobility are things worth cultivating and worth preserving, then in that case the entire profession of prostitution should be abolished as being a leper spot on mankind. It is this profession which has spread the infection of venereal diseases in mankind. If for nothing else, at least to save a man or a woman from an irresponsible and immoral life and the horrible diseases,

prostitution should be considered as most reprehensible.

A STUDENT.—True. What is the last pledge, Sir, that one has to take ?

TEACHER.—The last pledge is the insistence upon the attitude of absolute non-violence or Ahimsa in relation to the entire animal and human worlds.

According to this pledge a man will not knowingly kill any sentient being without any proper reason such as of self-defence or the defence of one's relations and property. Once a snake was found in a roof of a room in our Ashram building. Men rushed to kill it. The snake simply fled rapidly in order to escape. Bhagwan Devatma found his disciples chasing it. He called them back with a loud voice and stopped them from killing the serpent. He then said to his disciples : "Even a serpent has a right to live. Kill it when it attacks you and not merely because it is a snake and specially when it is running away."

This is the spirit of the eighth pledge.

From these eight pledges you can now understand that the one thing that appears most obvious is the true freedom that a man gets to a certain extent from the slavery to those acts which make him prove harmful to himself, his wife, his property, the fair sex, his fellow human beings, animals, etc. By such a freedom man's character is very much elevated. In fact, the Dev Samaj attempts to create in man the sense of higher humanity which saves him from a sinful and criminal life.

## TRUE LIBERTY AND HERO-WORSHIP

A STUDENT.—There is one very important question, Sir, which I would like to put with your permission.

TEACHER.—Yes, you can do so.

A STUDENT.—I generally hear people say that by insisting upon the worship of the Founder of the Dev Samaj, the Dev Samaj is developing a slave mentality in the hearts of its members. Everybody says that Guru-worship is now out of date and is, therefore, not a wholesome institution for man.

TEACHER.—I have already told you that the Dev Samaj is a voluntary institution. It has no backing of any Government. It has no militia of its own to force people to accept its tenets and thus spread its cult by sword. It is open to a man to seek admission to the Society and it is also open to him to leave it if he so desires. If the rules and regulations apply to him, it is only during the time that he is living as a member of the Dev Samaj. In a voluntary organization no question of use of force arises. Since there is no compulsion, there can be no bondage set by any outside authority.

A STUDENT.—That is true, Sir. But it is also true that when a man joins the Dev Samaj, he has to accept the Founder as the one true worshipful being.

TEACHER.—The Dev Samaj teaches that Bhagwan Devatma, its most worshipful Founder, is a most unique manifestation. In the evolutionary course, he has appeared in the world with the heredity of the highest psychic forces. He has developed these forces to their full splendour during his life-time. These highest psychic forces have evolved in him a special kind of light and a special kind of power. This light is called *Deva Jyoti* and this power is called *Deva Tej*. It is the chief characteristic of this *Deva Jyoti* that whenever it enters the heart of a fit soul it reveals to him that finer and most essential thing in his being called the soul. No other light—physical, intellectual or altruistic—is competent to reveal the nature of soul. As soon as a man gets this light, he gets a true perspective of the real

state of his soul. His thoughts and actions stand revealed before him. If they are low they appear to him as ugly, for they are in fact ugly. If there is a lack of higher feelings in him, he realizes this lack as a great loss and so realizes the need of developing higher forces. By getting *Deva Tej* he is able to get freedom from the grip of undesirable low loves and develop higher, nobler and altruistic feelings.

True to this belief, the Dev Samaj teaches that as human souls are led by low-loves and low-hates so they need this *Deva Jyoti* and this *Deva Tej* very urgently which they should try to get from Bhagwan Devatma. In order to get these wonderful gifts from him, they have to fulfil a universal law. I have already told you that the entire universe is law-bound. Nothing can be achieved without satisfying a law. The universal law of the soul-world in Nature is that if we want to get the treasures of knowledge or higher life from any man, we cannot get them unless we develop reverence and love for him. In the same way if any person is eager to get the gift of *Deva Jyoti* and *Deva Tej* from Bhagwan Devatma, he must fulfil that universal law and establish communion with him by means of reverence and love for him. Such being the case, the Dev Samaj would not be true to itself if it were not to emphasize the inevitable need of the right sort of belief in Bhagwan Devatma and the need of the highest reverence and love which is worship. That is why every person who joins the Dev Samaj has to cherish this belief and feel the need of true reverence and at higher stages true love for Bhagwan Devatma.

A STUDENT.—I do understand now, Sir, that the Dev Samaj is true to itself when it proclaims that worship of Bhagwan Devatma is necessary for every soul. But does not worship of a Guru involve the surrender of self?

TEACHER.—When anybody possesses reverence or love or both for any higher being he has to surrender his ignoble self for his higher self. A man who is full of himself has no room for another. That man who is full of his "self" or ego treads on very dangerous ground and if he pursues his life to the logical extreme, he will not be able to exist.

A STUDENT.—How can it be proved that one cannot even exist if one takes one's absolutely self-ridden soul to an extreme?

TEACHER.—Supposing a man is walking on the brink of a stream flowing with clear, silvery and sparkling water and suppose he feels thirsty, what has he to do if he has to quench his thirst?

A STUDENT.—He has to bend down and drink water.

TEACHER.—The bending down is, therefore, a condition precedent to his drinking water. This bending down means nothing but surrender of self. In the same way, if a student wants to learn anything from a teacher, he has to go into an attitude of humility and reverence. If he has none of them, he can never learn. Hence when you boys come to college and attend classes you have to surrender yourself. To the extent that you possess reverence for a teacher, you benefit by him. This fact has been observed by our Rishies who have said: "*Shradhawanam labhatey gyanam.*" (Those who possess reverence are able to get knowledge). Can you tell me if there is any other way by which one can get knowledge?

A STUDENT.—Now I can understand, Sir, that in order to quench thirst from a running stream I must bend; and so in order to get knowledge I must become humble and reverential.

TEACHER.—There are some students who develop even love for their teachers. I have already told you how Boswell developed love for his master, Dr. Johnson, and how Plato developed love for his master, Socrates. All the dialogues of Plato are written by Plato himself but throughout his dialogues, it is Socrates whom Plato has brought to the fore-front and made and proclaimed him as the author of all those truths contained in the dialogues. Here is an example of a disciple, Plato, who surrendered his self altogether!

Again, it is impossible to fail to develop reverence or love for any person in whom we are able to see the beauty of knowledge or beauty of character. The presence of beauty draws our heart to the thing beautiful. That is why you find the great personalities of the world being worshipped by their followers. This worship is called hero-worship.

A STUDENT.—Is hero-worship necessary, Sir ?

TEACHER.—Decidedly, it is most necessary for every individual or nation which wants to grow great. It is not possible for humanity to grow great if it is absolutely blind to its great men. The great personalities are very rare. In a whole

century, a nation can count them on one's finger-ends. All the rest are very common people. If these common folk have to develop into the type of these great men, they must imbibe their virtues. If they fail to do so, they shall remain as they are—a very common people. If they imbibe their virtues they grow into their type and thus the virtues of great personalities become the common property of all mankind. This raises the level of man. Hence it is that heroes have to be worshipped because by worship alone can one make the treasure of their virtues one's own.

A STUDENT.—I have heard very often the need of hero-worship being emphasised by great leaders. Even Lala Lajpat Rai once wrote an article on the essential need of hero-worship. But why is it that those who see the value of hero-worship decry Guru-worship in the Dev Samaj?

TEACHER.—I am glad to hear that the need of hero-worship is now being realized in our country, especially in these days when too much stress is laid on the so-called liberty which is nothing but licence.

You have to realize that a human child is born helpless. He has, therefore, to depend for many years on the service of others. If he fails to avail himself of this, he digs his own grave. There are innumerable instances of children on record who have strayed away from the protection of their parents and guardians and so have either died a premature death or suffered untold miseries. There was recently a case in the Punjab of a matriculate girl who defied her parents and went to a distant town for employment. She was all alone. The tongawala, whose tonga she hired, saw that she was alone and a stranger. He decoyed her. He assaulted her and ruined her honour. The next day she reported to the police. But the mischief was done. She defied the protection of her parents and suffered its consequences. She did not recognize that dependence was not always bad and in her case especially it was necessary at that critical stage of her life.

A STUDENT.—It is true, Sir, that we are born helpless. But should we continue our dependence all through our life?

TEACHER.—The dependence is of two kinds. There is one kind of dependence which we cannot shake off. Once we shake it off, we go the way of perdition. As for an example, we are

dependent on the light of the sun, on air and atmosphere, on food and water, etc. If we dream of getting independent of them and make an attempt to get out of the dependence what shall be our fate ? Without food and water one shall have to die of hunger and thirst; without air one shall not be able to live for any length of time; without sun light one shall get blind and cold. This is a form of dependence which Nature has laid upon us all as the law of our life. This is called healthy dependence. Anybody who chafes at this dependence is a fool.

There is another kind of dependence which is also essential for the life of man. This is dependence on society. If a human child is separated from human society in its infancy and is brought up by animals, he will forfeit all the privileges of being a man. He will grow into a type of animal. Even at a late stage if a man is cut off altogether from humanity, he will intellectually shrink into something inert. Any person, therefore, who chafes at this dependence on humanity is a fool. In the same way, Nature has made man dependent in the soul-world on soul-light called *Deva Jyoti* and soul-power called *Deva Tej*. He must get these for his soul-illumination and soul-evolution. If he chafes at these, he will forfeit his privilege to get light and power.

A STUDENT.—What is the other kind of dependence, Sir, which is undesirable ?

TEACHER.—At a certain age, man should possess the ability of earning his own livelihood. If he depends on others for his maintenance when he is able to maintain himself, he becomes a rotter. If instead of developing the feeling of self-help and self-reliance, he goes on depending on others and grows nervous at every new step he takes, he becomes a contemptible soul. In the same way, if he knows any social custom to be evil and is not able to resist it, but yields to the pressure of the wrong public opinion on which he depends, he becomes false to himself and false to the world. If a person knows anything to be morally evil and is not able to resist the pressure of his friends or yields to the temptations, he ruins himself and others. This kind of dependence is a very poor sort of thing. In the same way, if a man knows something to be good and something to be true and gives them up because of social



pressure, he betrays his dignity and privilege as a man. Any person, therefore, who has joined the Dev Samaj and knows its value and has experience of what treasures of noble life he receives by the worship of Bhagwan Devatma, and if after realizing all these things he gives them up because ignorant or wicked persons persecute him, he loses the greatest thing in life.

A STUDENT.—I understand, Sir, that there is a kind of dependence which promotes our welfare and there is a kind of dependence which degrades our lives.

TEACHER.—I call the first kind of dependence a mark of true liberty and the second one as a mark of slavery.

A STUDENT.—I can understand, Sir, that for our subsistence we are dependent upon food, drink, air and sunshine. I can also understand that for our life and progress as human beings, we need human society. If we violate these truths we do so at our own risk. But how do you say that Nature has made us dependent upon Bhagwan Devatma ?

TEACHER.—If you know the law of light you will know the value of it. In the physical world we are absolutely dependent upon physical light. In the intellectual world we are absolutely dependent on intellectual light. We know that no amount of physical light can reveal to the animals the laws of Nature which are known to man. This is so because they lack the intellectual light. Higher up we need altruistic light. It is this light which can show the beauty of any altruistic force. Light of mercy can show us the beauty of mercy. The light of gratitude can show us the beauty of gratitude. The light of unselfish service can show us the beauty of unselfish service. Those bereft of this light cannot see the beauty of these altruistic forces. This is why some of the most enlightened people are lacking in mercy or gratitude or spirit of unselfish service because there is no light in them to show them the beauty of these forces, and the need of their cultivation. But we have to take note of one thing. For each value, we need a separate light. Light of mercy cannot show us the beauty of gratitude. The light of gratitude does not show us the beauty of unselfish service. The light of none of these altruistic forces shows us the beauty of truth. In the same way none of these lights can show us the nature of the soul and the laws of its evolution and dissolution. The only light which can reveal the nature of the soul

and its evolutionary and dissolutionary courses, etc., is called the highest psychic light or *Deva Jyoti*. Every man needs this *Deva Jyoti* if he wants to see his inner self as it is, and the laws of its evolution or dissolution, etc. He is, therefore, completely dependent upon the one who can impart this light.

A STUDENT.—How is this light generated, Sir?

TEACHER.—Physical light is generated by physical forces. Intellectual light is generated by intellectual forces. The altruistic light is generated by altruistic powers. The highest psychic light is generated by highest psychic forces.

A STUDENT.—What are those highest psychic forces, Sir ?

TEACHER.—They are the forces of complete and all-sided love for truth and goodness; and complete and all-side hatred for what is antagonistic to truth and goodness or what is wrong and evil in the various relations of the universe.

A STUDENT.—You claim, Sir, that these highest psychic forces have evolved in Bhagwan Devatma ?

TEACHER.—Inded so. And this is the reason why we believe that he has been able to reveal, for the first time in the history of mankind, the nature and philosophy of the true science-grounded system of religion. This is the reason why he was able to take up the following unique vow at the prime age of thirty-two :

“May the beautiful truth and goodness  
My foremost aim represent ;  
And in the service of the world  
My life be fully spent.”

For the first time in the history of mankind, Bhagwan Devatma—our most worshipful Master—has been able to take this unique life-vow. It is these unique forces which have enabled him to found the Society of the Dev Samaj which has got a wonderful moral basis and a wonderful constitution. No society, creed or cult on the face of the earth has been able to establish its organization on such a basis. If you want to know the truth of this you should go and examine other societies. It is by means of these unique forces that Bhagwan Devatma has been able not only to liberate hundreds and thousands from various sins and crimes but has in hundreds of cases enabled the sinners to pay back in thousands, the ill-gotten money filched by them before they had joined the Dev Samaj.

Besides this, there are many cases in which the fit souls have made reparation for certain other past sins or crimes committed by them before they joined the Dev Samaj. This kind of work also is altogether unprecedented in the history of mankind.

It is because of these unique forces that Bhagwan Devatma has been able to see that all is Nature and that the so-called supernaturalism and all its attendant millions of superstitions and false beliefs, rites, ceremonies, exercises, etc., are the creation of the human imagination.

It is by means of these unique forces that Bhagwan Devatma has placed before mankind a new ideal of life. Instead of considering happiness as the goal, Bhagwan Devatma has taught complete soul-knowledge and complete soul-evolution as the destiny of man. It is by means of these unique forces that Bhagwan Devatma has shown to man that he is bound in relations and therefore his evolution and dissolution are also bound with relations. Having discovered this truth he has laid down thousands of commandments for his followers to purify their relations in various ways and establish higher harmonies with them. In fact, by these and such like other gifts Bhagwan Devatma has proved beyond doubt that he is Dev Atma and that he is the fountain-head of this unique light called *Deva Jyoti* and unique power called *Deva Tej*.

Once a fit soul feels the need of this unique light and this unique power, he comes to believe and consider that slavery consists in incapacity to develop reverence and love for the Devatma in order to have his unique light and unique power and that true liberty consists in being able to fulfil this law for the highest interests of one's own soul. If it is not slavery but real physical freedom to seek the sunshine when one is shivering in cold so also it cannot be slavery but real spiritual freedom to seek *Deva Jyoti* and *Deva Tej* when one is being racked and ruined by the blasting winds of low loves and low hates. Hence as it is a sign of sanity to bask in the sunshine of the physical sun, so it is a sign of the highest moral and spiritual sanity to bask in the sunshine of Bhagwan Devatma.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, Bhagwan Devatma is after all a man.

TEACHER.—So was Krishna a man whom you worship, so was Christ a man whom you worship, so was Guru Nanak

a man whom you worship, so were other founders of various sects human beings. In humanity man cannot but depend on man. In order to get rid of his ignorance, he has to depend on man. In order to save himself from perils, he has to depend on man. In the time of war, it is the general on whom we have to depend. In the hour of illness, it is the doctor on whom we have to depend. At the time of new epidemics, it is the medical research scholars on whom we have to depend. When man has to cross the waters and conquer land, sea and air, it is the scientists on whom we have to depend. In all the walks of life, in all the troubles whether physical, social, intellectual or moral, man has to depend on man. But these men are the heroes on whom man has to depend. They are in their own time the great benefactors of humanity. All our reverence and gratitude are due to them and none else. In his spiritual needs also man has to depend upon a unique manifestation who also should appear from human stock. But though he appears in the course of evolution of man, he brings a sort of heredity with himself which is unique. It is this heredity which elevates him to the position of the highest and greatest benefactor, the highest and greatest teacher, the One True Spiritual Sun. He is, therefore, the *Dev Atma* (Sublime Soul) as distinguished from *Manush Atma* (Human Soul). We call him *Dev Atma* because of that unique heredity and because the complete unfoldment of this heredity has enabled him to generate *Deva Jyoti* and *Deva Tej* which are needed by every human being. Though, therefore, in body he is no doubt a human being, in soul he is the *Dev Atma*. We are, therefore, not worshipping a *Manush Atma* or a human soul but we are worshipping the *Dev Atma* or the highest sublime soul.

## MATERNAL LOVE

A STUDENT.—Sir, how is it that “Love” has captured the imagination of all mankind, so strongly and so fiercely? It is true that strong and sometime mocking words are used against it by some who denounce it as a sort of madness or associate it with lust and therefore call it a hateful thing or pure sentimentalism or frothy effervescence of uncontrolled emotional nature of man. In spite of such condemnations, it still keeps its fascination for the young and the aged, for men and women, and holds its sovereignty on them.

TEACHER.—Have you recently read something in praise of love that you feel so much about it?

A STUDENT.—Yes, Sir. I read in a book that some young soldiers were cutting free jokes on “Love”, when an elderly person turned round and said to them with a gloomy look on his face :

“You shouldn’t speak about love like that, lads. In a man’s life there is nothing greater than love, and love must be honoured in the same way as you honour your own mother or your own country. Love is the embodiment of everything you hold most precious—your country, your fields, your home, life itself and your children—everything you stand for. And you should be proud to die for love, just as for your country !”

Don’t you think, Sir, that it is the highest praise that can be lavished on any sentiment ? Why has humanity gone mad on it ?

TEACHER.—Love is honoured because it embodies certain other virtues.

A STUDENT.—What are they, Sir ?

TEACHER.—It deals a death blow to the feeling of utter selfishness and for that matter on self-love or *ahang priyata*. *Ahang priyata* is responsible for the commission of most of the sins and crimes, for the infliction of suffering on others, and for the creation of self-created miseries. Love is a great solvent

of this over-dominating tragic force.

A STUDENT.—Sir, will you please illustrate it ?

TEACHER.—My boys, look at your mothers. In their daily life you will see how love conquers selfishness.

A STUDENT.—You are right, Sir. But we have no incidents of life before us. Kindly give us some illustrations.

TEACHER.—In one of the text books for middle classes prescribed in the days when I was schooling, a story was given of a mother who had to cross a snow-covered tract with a babe in her arms. When the night approached and strong icy winds blew, the mother felt her strength giving way. Gradually she realized that it was going to be the last journey of her life on this planet. But she thought of her baby. She was a woman with the strongest sense of modesty and shame. But all that faded from her. She uncovered herself and wound round the babe all her clothes. Then fearing that her baby, if left to himself, might be frozen to death on snow-clad ground, she lay down full prone on back and keeping her baby on her breasts she wound her arms round it. She, then, blissfully fainted away. Next morning, when the winds had ceased some travellers passed that way. They saw a naked woman lying dead. They unwound her arms and took up the baby who had just woken up from a sound sleep. He smiled in their faces—a smile of perfect and blessed innocence—never realizing how she who had given him birth had gladly died for him. What a self-effacement !

A STUDENT.—Indeed so, Sir. Please give us some more instances.

TEACHER.—Even this one instance is enough. But you don't seem to observe in your own homes or you would find the same spirit of self-effacement in your own mothers.

There was a man who was lucky enough to have a most devoted wife. He was a brute. He used to beat his children cruelly.

A STUDENT.—(*Interrupting*) You will excuse me, Sir, if I interrupt you. Is it wrong for a father to beat a child?

TEACHER.—Psychologists of the present day violently decry it. Physical punishment can never make anyone moral.

A STUDENT.—But fathers love also.

TEACHER.—The child should have consciousness of that. If

he associates his father only with severity, he gets certain mental perversions. A child can grow only in love. For the sake of discipline, certain restrictions should be used but only by those who love, so that the child may not go into violent conflicts. However, I shall talk of that at some other time.

This father was a brute. He himself wrote down his confessions. Two of his sons broke away from him and ran away to some distant lands. The mother bore that cross because she loved her husband. She had only one son left in the family. One day, this cruel father beat even that son mercilessly. Then the wife's mother love could not bear further strain. So she, the most uncomplaining creature—as the husband wrote about her—stiffened and mustering up her courage born of mother love, said to him. "If you again beat our son, I shall leave your roof for ever."

This cruel father once again beat that child. Next morning when he woke up, he found his house deserted. He got a slip of paper on which this suffering mother informed him that she was leaving for an unknown place with her darling child.

Years rolled on. One day this cruel father received a telegram from his son informing him that his mother was on death-bed and she remembered him. He went and saw how his son had grown magnificently. When he met his wife, this angel not only greeted him with the holy flame of love but even apologized to him, expressing how as a weak mother, she could not bear her child being brutally beaten. He was also in a chastened mood. He wept and apologized both to her and his son. Soon after this, the dear mother died with a peaceful mind. Her face betokened what an amount of holiness and peace her departing soul had imprinted on it.

A STUDENT.—(*With tears in his eyes*). And yet we are so callously indifferent to this love which constantly looks at us with its benign gaze and makes our existence possible.

TEACHER.—Once a story appeared in a magazine recorded as a true story. A pleader got an attack of a mysterious disease which kept him in bed for seven years. The huge pile laid by for a rainy day thinned and ultimately vanished. One day the wife had nothing to cook for her children. She had nobody to appeal to for a loan, for even debts had swelled. Hence one night she put on a beggar's

dress and went out to beg. When she had knocked at many doors and got something, she was about to return. Then an idea gripped her mind that she should knock at one more door.

She did so. A man came out. As soon as he cast his eyes on her, he felt stunned and said, "You, mother". She ran away from the place as she felt she was recognized. Next day, somebody brought one full month's rations to her house and said that one of her old servants had sent it from his shop. At night-fall he himself came to her and falling at her feet, sobbed out and said, "Divine mother, you could be driven to this end and I, your servant, am living and flourishing. Until father recovers, you shall have rations from my shop. I am made by your family and specially by you".

Children ! Imagine the spirit of self-effacement which mother love reveals.

A STUDENT.—What a step and that also taken by a pleader's wife. Oh mother, mother thy place is in paradise !

TEACHER.—Your feelings are noble enough. Have you read *Les Misérables* ?

A STUDENT.—No, Sir. I have not read it.

TEACHER.—In that also you find the story of a mother's amazing spirit of self-effacement. A young girl had an illegitimate child. She had lived with a young man as his sweetheart. But he did not marry her. Hence her child was called illegitimate.

A STUDENT.—Should not such a child be called illegitimate ?

TEACHER.—That depends on the view one takes. A child should not be branded because his mother and father had not married. But this case was peculiar. The girl had been jilted. Throughout she lived a blameless life. Her child was a daughter. In order to bring her up, she made tremendous sacrifices. Once she had to sell the beautiful tresses of her head for the child. Once again she had to agree to all her teeth being extracted in order to have money to be sent to people who took care of her child. To get even one tooth extracted in those days was a crucifixion. To get all the thirty-two teeth extracted was an unspeakable torment. How immeasurably deep and ardent her love must be which could overcome all this torment !



A STUDENT.—A very fine illustration, Sir !

TEACHER.—Love is being hallowed by writers because it possesses, as one of its great elements, the virtue of self-effacement. Once a mother came to me and said : “My son has been in bed with typhoid for a month. I don’t know what has happened to me. For the last 21 days, I am not able to get a wink of sleep at night. My husband and others who keep watch assure me that they would keep awake. But (*melting into tears*) my heart does not feel assured. I fear they may get a spell of sleep and my child may be neglected. Oh ! what should I do ?”

I felt moved. I told her she should sleep during the day, as day has no such spell to send us to sleep as night has. She should have some faith that the father of her child also possesses love.

She said : “Yes, my dear husband possesses great love. But I am mad. I feel how can I live in the world if my child is snatched away from me !”

I said : “This is an ugly aspect of love. Perishable things *shall* perish. Body is a perishable thing. If it ceases to function at any time, a very natural thing happens. Soul builds a finer body and lives identical life. Our souls do not die with our physical death.”

“You believe that soul lives identical life on the next earth. Do you believe that my son is my son and he can recognize me as his mother even on the ethereal plane ?” she asked.

I said : “Yes.”

She left me with peace in her heart. However, her child was pulled out of that crisis by good doctors.

## CONJUGAL LOVE

A STUDENT.—Sir, mother's love is indeed divine. But the man I quoted, perhaps, meant wife and husband's love. Is that also divine ?

TEACHER.—That depends on the attitude of mind. In India, the ideal wives have been represented to be Sita, Savitri or Damayanti, etc. We read in our ancient literature how one girl was betrothed to a blind man. When she came to know that her husband was blind, she bound her own eyes and refused to use them and she got blind. In the same way another woman whose husband had developed leprosy carried her crippled husband from place to place. Some women in India went to the extent of *even gladly* immolating themselves on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands. Sacrifices made by Indian women have passed into legends. They have taken love to the heights of sacred devotion and worship. In their case love is a sublime flame. It possesses the one inseparable virtue of self-effacement.

A STUDENT.—Would you please illustrate this from your experience ?

TEACHER.—Yes, I will. I shall tell you both about those I have read and those I have seen.

In the Titanic disaster, an European lady refused to get down into a boat intended for women and children even though her husband appealed to her. She said something like this : "My love ! we have lived together all these years of life, let us embrace death together. Life without you has no meaning for me."

A STUDENT.—How splendid this !

TEACHER.—An American writer once wrote about a girl he knew. She was engaged to a young man. He was then healthy. But he developed T.B. He was in bed. She asked permission of her parents to go and serve him. She did her best. But this white plague had gripped the dear boy. At last

doctors said that it was a matter of a few days and he will have to give up his ghost. Then this girl persuaded her fast dying fiancé to agree to undergo wedding ceremony with her so as to permit her to bear his dear name. The ailing boy could not refuse her this. A priest came. They married. Next day the dear boy passed away. This girl lived all her life loyal to him and his name. Love of a wife when displayed in such colours looks really like a divine love. Here no low sex-love or lust mars its beauty. It involves complete self-effacement.

A STUDENT.—This is an inspiring incident.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Once I saw with my own eyes a surprising incident in the life of a young girl. She came of a rich family. She was married to a man who passed for an England-returned man. After some days, the mist was cleared and it was proved that he was a mere clerk on Rs. 40 or so in a foreign concern. But his wife clung to him. She, however, persuaded her brothers to give him some job in their office. They did so. But they found him good for nothing. After a pretty long experience they told him frankly that he was no good to them and that they felt him a great liability. He got offended and announced that he was leaving. His wife who was living with her husband in her brothers' house came to know that he was going. Her mother and brothers told her to be firm and not to go with him, and he would surely return to her as a prodigal child. She did not utter a word in reply. She simply told her husband : "I am going with you. My place is with you and nowhere else." Even the worthless man—her husband—was taken aback that one brought up in such affluent conditions was prepared to share a gloomy, dismal and hopeless future with him. In my presence, she left with him in spite of her mother's lamentations and brothers' protests. Here devotion dominated passion. When passion dominates devotion there is no love bond. It is all lust and to talk of lust as love is sheer blasphemy.

A STUDENT.—Sir, I don't understand you. Can there be a marriage bond without sex-contact ?

TEACHER.—It is possible, though you find it very rarely. I have heard of a foreign woman who has married an Indian of her way of religious thinking and there is no sex-contact between them. I have before me a living example of a very

highly placed officer who has passed all his wedded life with his partner without sex-contact. Ramakrishan Parmahansa lived with his wife without sex-contact. Though these examples are rare, yet idealistic people of this type do exist. Sex-contact is natural and permissible among wedded partners. Within proper limits it is helpful both to the physical and the psychic life of men and women. It leads to the culmination of woman's great destiny, i.e., to be a mother. Only remember that when pure devotion dominates passion, the marriage bond becomes divine. But when passion dominates pure devotion, it becomes lust.

A STUDENT.—Will you please illustrate this ?

TEACHER.—A pleader used to show extraordinary love for his wife. It appeared to all that if he lost her, he would go mad and would never marry again in life. To his ill-luck, he lost his wife. He literally rolled on the ground in agony. All felt sympathy for him and even praised his infatuation. I call his hysterical outburst as infatuation. This is because he shocked the world of his acquaintance by celebrating his next marriage on the 13th day of the death of his first wife.

A STUDENT.—Was he a brute ?

TEACHER.—No, he was not a brute. But animality preponderated in his nature over the divine flame of love. Marriage of two human beings ought to have more of spiritual element in it than physical. Even physical element should be saturated with spirituality. The marriage bond should achieve the higher ideals of true comradeship, true mutual sympathy and service.

A STUDENT.—I hope women do not show the spirit manifested by the man in the above instance.

TEACHER.—Women also do so, though in rare cases. There have been cases of women who have married again a few days or months after the husband's demise.

A STUDENT.—Such chapter shown by woman is most painful.

TEACHER.—It is. Woman is nation's repository of purity, fidelity and other virtues. Woman is not equal to man, nor is man equal to woman. Both have different departments. Both are superior in their own spheres of life. Woman is predominantly a mother. Sons are not so much shocked by the father's

free love as by the mother's lapses.

A STUDENT.—How Sir ?

TEACHER.—I know the case of a child whose mother lived a loose life. She had become a mistress to a man. When the son came of age, he realized how his life had become intolerable by his mother's fall. He at last found relief in committing suicide by drowning.

A famous English writer once wrote a story, perhaps in *The Strand*, how a son who was an illegitimate child of his mother who was dead, found relief in death by suicide when he was informed by his aunt, who had brought him up, that he was an illegitimate child. A child feels mother's lapse more keenly than of his father. A child is a part of the mother in more ways than he is part of the father. One cannot add to the dignity of womanhood by adjudicating law or writing literature justifying her fall or by dragging her into the mire of infidelity in which man is alleged to be wallowing.

A STUDENT.—I understand from your talk that when devotion dominates passions and self-love, we have love in its beautiful form and never otherwise.

TEACHER.—Indeed so.

A STUDENT.—Life shorn of that love can hardly make married life bearable.

TEACHER.—That depends on the nature of wedded partners. There are persons who consider marriage to be a matter of social necessity. They put up with all kinds of bickerings. Husbands get all satisfaction of life in business or in outside engagements and wives in their children.

However, in such cases also the virtue of love, i.e., self-effacement, is essential—without it life becomes a hell. I have seen several tragedies enacted by selfishness. A young girl married a young boy definitely with a motive of having gay time. Hence soon after marriage she began to harass him for money to make new purchases every time she went out. His means were very much limited. He broke down under the strain. His wife had no mercy. The result was that the wedded life began to show signs of cracking. As ill-luck would have it, the husband's health broke down. And his wife—hardly 22 or 23 years of age—began to manifest indifference in nursing him. When the husband complained, she had the nerve to

desert him in the hands of his relatives and returned only on the day he expired—just to shed conventional tears and make conventional lamentations.

This girl had a wrong approach to marriage. Marriage is comradeship in which each partner has to find happiness in making the other partner happy and experience satisfaction in building his or her life by willing sacrifices. In marriage, altruism alone makes life interesting, ennobling and worth living. If altruism does not enter, the conjugal love must take its place. Mankind has still to taste the heavenly sweetness of a life which makes one always think of another, plan for another, provide for another and live for another. Marriage provides us a great opportunity for that way of life. Those, therefore, who marry for dowry or for money or for personal enjoyment, or for luxury and social amenities and not for pure unadulterated love, ride for a fall. In many cases they do wreck the beautiful wedded life on the shoals or hidden rocks of selfishness.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, in these days of economic strains to demand dowry is no sin.

TEACHER.—I do not discuss dowry to-day. I only want to impress upon you the fact that selfishness works as a poison for wedded love. Demand for dowry is a form of selfishness. You may get rich dowry but you cannot with that bargaining spirit create an attitude of pure devotion. I personally know of the case of an England-returned brilliant graduate who was offered a girl and nearly a lac of rupees. He was fortunate in having consciousness of the beauty of happy wedded life. He knew that happy married life was not possible with a bargaining spirit. So he started seeing girls. He found one who, he felt convinced, would make a happy home for him. He married her without a dowry. I saw this pair years after. Every body who met me said that they were as great lovers even after years of wedded life as on the day they had married. They found their world in their own home. To see them was to feel happy. Such is the aura they carry with themselves. A man who sacrificed one lac and a millionaire's daughter for the sake of the eclat of his heart, though poor, deserves all this grand married joy.

A STUDENT.—Sir, how to know that a particular pair possesses love ?

TEACHER.—Love involves self-forgetfulness and an ardent desire to do the best for the object of his love. A highly placed officer once narrated to me a touching story of the devotion of his otherwise illiterate wife. "It was," he said, "a terribly hot night. We had no electric fan. So I asked my wife to wave the hand-fan for me just to make me go off to sleep. When I got up in the morning I found to my great amazement that she was still waving the hand-fan. When I asked her why she did not stop, when I had gone off to sleep, she simply said that she was afraid stopping the fan would disturb my sleep. She added that she could sleep during the day whereas I could not do so."

A STUDENT.—Sir, I think, we should have love-marriages and not conventional marriages.

TEACHER.—Love-marriages are not necessarily marriages inspired by "Love." They are in the largest majority of cases "fancy" marriages or marriages based on physical attraction. That officer had not had a love-marriage. We Indians are brought up in an atmosphere in which we love one whom we marry. The whole question is what is our attitude towards life. If our attitude is one of selfishness, we are liable to poison every tie. If our attitude is one of helpfulness, we shall beautify every tie. The world has not learnt that in every home and school the greatest effort should be made to show the horror of life of selfishness, and the divine beauty of the life of helpfulness and service. An atmosphere should be created in every home and school to cry shame on selfishness and to glorify the life of helpfulness. Social appreciation and approbation should be shown to such boys and girls who show either a uniform life of helpfulness or set an extraordinary example of helpfulness. The difficulty is that neither homes nor schools create an atmosphere to develop the social virtues of service to other fellow beings.

I know of some families which evince this trait remarkably well and it is not surprising that children of these families show a wonderful spirit of loyalty in wedded life and enduring comradeship. When I see the children of such families, I feel so elevated and happy !

It is terrible that the world has missed the keynote of life. Only some have caught a glimpse of it. But no systematic

effort has been made to nurture children with these essential principles of higher happiness of life

We must remember that if there is some law in the world which is worthy of the deepest realization, it is the law of relations. We are irrevocably bound up in relations. Unrelated life is inconceivable and impossible. We are related to the physical world. We are related to the vegetable world. We are related to the animal world. We are related to the human world. In the human world we are related to parents, brothers and sisters, husband or wife, lineage and country, nation and humanity and all our benefactors.

Now, by adopting an attitude of self-love towards all these, we become maladjusted in relation to them. From our life flow all kinds of sins and crimes, all kinds of disharmonies and aggressive wars. Humanity has not realized that an attitude of self-love is far more destructive than anything else. As related beings we cannot afford to be self-centred. We have to find life in mutual goodwill and mutual regard. This is not a small matter. We have to start cultivating it from infancy. From the birth of a child, we have to bring him up with the consciousness that he is not alone in life. He grows, develops and achieves his full stature—physical, mental, moral and spiritual—through his relation with others. *He owes duties and responsibilities to them.* He cannot live for himself as thereby he lives an impossible life. He can fulfil all his duties by an attitude of altruism or service or love. To bear pure love for all kingdoms is our highest duty. Humanity has neglected this principle. It has on world-wide scale lived the principle of competition and profiteering. Has it succeeded in making human life happy? No, it has failed and shall always fail.

A STUDENT.—Sir, we realize that an attitude of self-love is the wickedest attitude. All our quarrels are due to it. We also realize that to wring the highest happiness out of wedded life which is the foundation and basis of entire humanity, both the brides and the bridegrooms should be inspired with this beautiful flame of pure love

TEACHER.—What do you think of a father who hoards money and occupies high social position but fails to enjoy the love and esteem of his children? The test of a wedded life is how far children feel proud of their parents and cherish reve-



rence and esteem for them or at least how far the parents have made themselves worthy of their children's esteem. Children also love and honour a father who loves and honours their mother. Those fathers who live unchaste life or practise cruelty on their wives, forfeit the respect of their children besides giving them a perverted view of life that wedded life is a life of a boar or a beast. Only lovers have right to have children. The children who are brought up in that atmosphere possess a sound attitude of life. Hence it is our first and foremost duty as wedded partners to be inspired by a higher ideal of mutual service, mutual regard and esteem, mutual goodwill, mutual helpfulness, life of purity, fidelity, chastity, comradeship and service of others. These elements must enter a wedded life if homes are to be saved from social rack and ruin.

A STUDENT.—Sir, your view of married life is pretty high. How to reach it ?

Teacher.—This ideal is being lived and practised in our society. Every member of our society is pledged against adultery and bigamy. Hundreds of married people are living inspired by these high ideals so that marriage is a blessing to both partners.

A STUDENT.—Do you permit divorce ?

TEACHER.—No, we do not. We penalize it. For us once a marriage, it is always a marriage.

A STUDENT.—Don't you think it is an injustice on those who don't want to live together ?

TEACHER.—Marriage is not a joy ride or a pastime. It is a most serious step. It should be taken with care and made most stable. Those who have tasted divorce, hate the very name of divorce. A divorced wife wrote, "And if you want to keep real tragedy and heart-break out of your life and more particularly out of the lives of people you love, remember that almost any sacrifice which you may be able to make to avoid divorce, must be made." Even Stalin of Russia, though a communist, has "tightened up the divorce laws" to make family life stable and enduring. Even Islam calls it a damnable thing not to be easily resorted to. In our society, divorce is strictly prohibited. Those who have made married life impossible for one another should not marry again so long as their wedded partner is alive. They have no right till then to another wedded life.

*ALTRUISTIC LOVE*

A STUDENT.—Sir, is there any other characteristic of love which makes it divine ?

TEACHER.—Love opens wide the hidden, unexplored and mighty reserves of our energy and power which lie beyond the reach of an average man.

A STUDENT.—Kindly illustrate it.

TEACHER.—I have often related to you the story of a slip of a girl hardly aged 16 who had become a mother. After a bath she had bound up her beloved baby in a wrapper and placed it on a small cot in sunshine to warm him. A huge bird made a sweep and catching the clothes of the child lifted him up into the skies. The girl saw this tragedy. She ran with eyes fixed on the bird. The bird flew to the top of a high hill. Unaided the girl ran up the precipice hill and climbed over its summit and then running towards the nest of the bird had a fight with it. She snatched her child and then her nerves failed her. The reserve of strength tapped by her love came to an end. It was a problem for her how to climb down. The villagers who had witnessed the feat came to her help. With their assistance she climbed down and was taken home. Thereafter she herself could not believe how she had climbed up that steep height.

A STUDENT.—It is surprising that we possess such a reserve.

TEACHER.—We do. There is a legend about the life of that great lover called Majnu. It is said that he was standing on road-side in his village when a man on camel back passed by him. He asked him the destination for which he was bound. He named it and that was the town where Laila, his beloved, lived. Then he told the camel-driver to convey his message to her. The camel-driver said, "Run along side my camel and convey to me your message. I have no time to stop and hear

it." The story goes that while delivering his message Majnu got so infatuated that he went on talking and running by the camel, till the man had reached Laila's town. The camel-driver said, "Now go and deliver your message to her yourself."

It is said Majnu was a weak man and yet he covered 56 miles all the time running. This is not improbable. Strong emotions especially of fear and love, open such reserves of our unfathomed powers.

Our illiterate women are considered to be too shy and weak to be able enough to face any danger. And yet it is a fact that Harnam Kaur, an ignorant girl, finding her father and brothers in danger of life at the hands of a redoubtable dacoit Lal Singh, on whose head a prize had been set by the Government, rushed at him from behind and catching hold of his necklace so twisted it that he felt strangled and fell fainted. Her brothers, then came, and finished him. Under ordinary circumstances it was impossible for her to face even a common dacoit. How marvellous it was that she grappled with a most terrible dacoit—a terror of the district—and liquidated him. She was unaware of such reserves of courage and power in her. But her love made them available and active.

These reserves of power appear in magnificent form when the love that dominates a persons is not of such a restricted kind.

A STUDENT.—How is this love restricted in kind ?

TEACHER.—It is restricted in the sense that it is confined to a child in the case of a mother, and to a wedded partner in the case of a married couple. It is also manifested in restricted form in relation to brothers and sisters and friends. But wherever it appears, it looks glorious. Far above this kind of love is altruistic love. It is not restricted. It is sometimes as vast in its scope as the humanity itself. As such it opens wonderful reserves of power of a soul and makes him a world power.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate this ?

TEACHER.—General Booth, the founder and captain of the world-wide society known as Salvation Army, was awakened to the mission of his life by the condition of souls in slums. His love for the down-trodden and sin-sodden persons assumed such gigantic forms that he could not rest without

founding a mighty movement for the sole purpose of helping such unfortunate people. Shorn of this love General Booth would have lived and died as any other clergyman or say Bishop. He became a fountainhead of mercy and sympathy to the down-trodden and the sin-sodden. How many realize that this unique drama enacted by him for the poor was due to the mighty force of altruistic love that was generated in his heart ?

Man does not realize that intellectual gifts in him do not tap the reserves of powers lying dormant in him. The only force that can do so is the love for the welfare of others.

It is sad that love is understood to be limited to man's love for woman and woman's love for man. Shirin Farhad captured the fancy of man. Story of the love of Sassi Punnoo fascinated man. And the world bursts out into singing: "world loves the lover". This restricted love, even if fair and legitimate, cannot carry us far. Altruistic love is a sublime love. It encompasses in its fold not one but countless persons. Hence it is immeasurably strong. It unfolds wonderful reserves of energy.

A STUDENT.—How is this altruistic love awakened and fed ?

TEACHER.—It is both awakened and fed by the sight of misery, large scale pain and sufferings, injustice and wrong, stalking or taking toll of millions of lives. While millions live thoughtless lives these few lose their sleep and rest and find relief only in jumping into the unknown to save others. Why does Christ's life-story grip the mind of millions ? The Christians teach that Christ took up the Cross for the suffering humanity. The sight of any one welcoming tortures and agonies to relieve the pain of others moves thousands of hearts. This is the mightiest appeal made by Christians. Why is it that Buddha, inspite of being an agnostic, commands such world-wide esteem ? It is because his followers teach that even when Buddha arrived to the stage of perfection, he could not bear the sight of leaving the world in bonds and sufferings and enjoy bliss alone. He, therefore, returned to save others. This thrills the minds of millions. Again, his unique mercy for the sentient life made him the Lord of Compassion. The magic of his name is charged with power of peace and com-

passion. One Buddha conveyed his compassionate life to countless persons. What a mighty force he became !

A STUDENT.—Can we also become as powerful ?

TEACHER.—Any one who becomes dominated by altruistic love can turn into a mighty force for the good of the world.

A STUDENT.—Why does not the largest majority of mankind display this trait ?

TEACHER.—It is because they are ruled by self-love. Hence their centre is self and circumference is self. If they go out, it is to spread misery and not joy.

A STUDENT.—Does not self-love also open up new reserves of power ?

TEACHER.—I have been talking of such reserves that spread joy and life all around. But there are low-loves also. When they assume a terrible form, they produce vast or world-wide destruction. But while the altruistic love finds a welcome in the hearts of growing number of men, low-loves meet world-wide resistance and opposition. Napoleon's wish to become world-power let loose on Europe hordes of soldiers who spread consternation and devastation. But he had a brief span to such a career. Hitler who was dominated by the same love and who infused into Germans false sense of racial superiority, also shook the world. But what brief lease of life his low-love had ! Every love—high or low—opens up hidden reserves of power. The higher love uses these reserves for the welfare of the world while low-loves utilize these reserves for the destruction of the world. When I talk of love it is always in the higher sense. Hence altruistic love is life-giving love. Low-love is life-devastating love.

A STUDENT.—But the world, Sir, is dominated by low-loves of various kinds, e.g., love of money or greed, love of sex-satisfaction or lust, love of self, name, fame, position, power, estate, kingdom or rule etc., love of intoxicating drugs, love of delicious dishes, love of idleness etc.

TEACHER.—Yes, they do rule man singly or in groups.

A STUDENT.—Do they all prove devastating ?

TEACHER.—Yes, they do. *Remove them and you remove all sins, crimes, most of the diseases and almost all conflicts and disharmonies.*

A STUDENT.—Do you think that altruistic loves are all helpful?

TEACHER.—They are, because it is their inseparable attribute to make us think of the welfare of others and to impel us to do good to others. If all men were busy in cherishing good-will for others and doing good service to them, peace and harmony would prevail everywhere. Human forces now yoked to low-loves would get harnessed in the service of others. What a heavenly stage of life would that be !

## ALTRUISTIC LOVE AND LOW LOVE—A CONTRAST

A STUDENT.—Sir, you have very kindly cleared the mist over love. We had hitherto believed intense sex-attraction to be love. But you have introduced an element in love which lifts it up miles higher above passions. According to you, higher devotion amounting to utter self-effacement should constitute the predominant mark of love. A mother's love for her child is a superb phenomenon. Again, a loyal, faithful and devoted feeling of a wedded one for his or her partner is also something holy. And if we measure love from the standard of its usefulness, altruistic love simply eclipses all the above forms of love. We would request you to continue the theme of altruistic love.

TEACHER.—As incarnations of mercy have tried to alleviate the sorrows and sufferings of millions and have filled with joy and decency thousands of homes, so those lacking in mercy have made this earth a dark misery. Colour prejudice has darkened the pages of history of the whites. Negro problem is still the most burning problem in America. One cannot measure the misery doled out to children of the black. Colour does not reflect inner colour of the heart. The black may be an angel while the white may a perfect devil. A white man may commit the dark crime of rape on a white or black woman, and he would not be hanged. But if a negro rapes a white woman, he shall be brutally lynched. Only lately papers published the case of a negro who was a soldier and who admitted that he had an affair with a white woman with her consent and the connivance of her husband and yet he was tried and convicted to capital punishment because the white woman said he had raped her. The English papers resented that such a dark injustice should be perpetrated on their land, for the case was tried in England by an American Tribunal.

To rape a woman is the darkest crime. But colour prejudice

of a kind evidenced in the above case shows a still darker heart. Where mercy is absent and prejudices rule, misery overflows like a deluge.

Hitler's prejudice against the Jews led him to those most terrible acts of injustice which have simply shocked the world into fury. Thousands were exiled. Thousands were thrown into concentration camps. Heaps of money of Jews were forfeited. No revenge can compare to this dark chapter.

All this was due to the presence of low hate born of prejudices. We have, therefore, always to remember that while altruistic love is sublime, low hate is simply demoniacal. Unless we know what low hate means, we can never awaken to the glorious beauty of altruistic love.

A STUDENT.—Indeed so, Sir. If colour-prejudice has worked havoc, have not religious prejudices let loose on the world those dark forces which have deluged the world with blood, fire and devastations ?

TEACHER.—They have. While we admire the good that religion does, we cannot shut our eyes to the low hate it inspires in its votaries. As the sense of racial superiority made Hitler's Germany mad, so the sense of religious superiority has made several creeds mad. Instead of teaching pure love for all, several religions have taught love as desirable only for those in the fold and hatred for those outside the fold. They denounce those outside their fold as *kaffir* and *apostate* for whom hell is reserved after death. They make their life a hell on earth. Humanity has to turn its attention to this most dangerous aspect of religion. Every religion has to be judged by the amount of love it develops in its votaries for all men alike and the extent to which it makes it impossible for the votaries to practise hate. Love waters the tree of life, hate blasts it root and branch.

A STUDENT.—Sir, we thank you for sounding this note of warning.

TEACHER.—I feel that hate rules the hearts of men and women thousands times more than love does. Hence I dread it. Democracy has introduced a rule by party. This party spirit is devil's own weapon to smash any good cause. The soul of party spirit is devil's agent enthroned in a heart. Hence this



party spirit develops in one a rich crop of hate. If this party-spirit or politics enters any religious society, it sounds its death knell. They are, therefore, the greatest sinners before the bar of mankind who cherish this spirit and introduce this filth of politics into any noble cause and poison its soul and body.

A STUDENT.—Sir, party spirit in a nation or people shorn of love for a higher cause, must produce havoc.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Love of a higher cause is altruism. Truly altruistic hearts cannot harbour such a beastly hate as the party spirit engenders. A soul possessed by it shall have no time for it. It is men dominated by self-interest only who as a rule, provide in their hearts suitable soil for the mushroom growth of wild passions of revenge and low-hate. *Where self-interest rules, party-spirit abounds and low-hate flourishes.*

A STUDENT.—Sir, is there any altruistic love besides mercy?

TEACHER.—There are so many kinds of such higher loves. Just take a scientist. When he is led by the love of knowledge of any truth of Nature and devotes his time and energy to its discovery without any expectation of monetary gain and finds joy only in its discovery and ungrudgingly allows the world to share the blessings of that truth, he shows that he possesses altruistic love. Scientists have been great benefactors of mankind. They are our friends who have prolonged the lives of people by discovering specifics against diseases and by discovering laws of health and strength. They have enriched the world by discovery of new methods of agriculture. What an amount of sufferings they removed from the world who discovered anaesthetics! What a step forward in science and human progress Harvey's theory of circulation of blood led to! Pasteur's germ theory has saved millions of lives. You can quote galaxy of scientists who have taken humanity many stages forward. Blessed was their spirit of benevolence by which they unhesitatingly gave all their discoveries to mankind to profit by.

*A low-hate is a deadly poison while altruistic love is a nectar divine.* He alone can claim to be religious who possesses one or more of altruistic forces. He can fittingly be called a monster who is mastered by low-hate.

A STUDENT.—Sir, how to spot low hate in any man?

TEACHER.—A man dominated by low-hate is bound to cherish evil thoughts and, if possible, do evil deeds to harm the object of his hate. If he cannot avenge himself on him by deeds, he will gloat in talking ill of him. He will everywhere try to produce disrespect and irreverence for him. It does not matter with him if the object of his low-hate is his own father, his own mother, his own brother or sister, or his own great benefactor. It does not matter with him if the object of his low-hate is an asset to others, his life a blessing to others, his past services a boon for others. His sole purpose is to destroy and doubly so the object of his hate.

A STUDENT.—What a demon such a person could be !

TEACHER.—A terrible instance of low-hate is recorded in "Lectures on the Conflict of Religion and Science." In the Christian history occurs an illustration of a woman philosopher who was so learned and persuasive in her talk that hundreds of persons gathered in the hall to listen to her discourses. A clergyman thought her to be a menace to Christianity. His 'piety' led him to nourish ill-will against her to such an extent that one day he and his fellow clergymen caught hold of her, battered her to death, cut her body into pieces and scraped the flesh from her bones and thus found satisfaction of their heart.

A STUDENT.—And, Sir, they still believed themselves to be religious!

TEACHER.—Yes, and the world still counts that clergyman religious. It is said he served his religion by removing a menace. All laws of chivalry, tolerance and humanity were set at naught by him. He was then and is even now, revered as a saint.

A STUDENT.—Why this perversion of thought, Sir ?

TEACHER.—This is so because humanity has yet to learn that man being a part of Nature degrades himself, if, led by any motive, he unduly harms the form and function and the very existence of another. To take the law in one's own hand and be a judge and executioner both, is put down in our times as something reprehensible. The fact is that man is not afraid of low-hates. He has no awareness of their horror. A man passes for a saint even when his heart is smeared with low-hate. He passes for a greater saint specially if that low-

hate is directed against the opponents of his faith.

A STUDENT.—What a need, then, there is for this warning to go to the world that as altruistic love waters the tree of the life of humanity, low-hate, born of party-spirit, creed-mania or frustrated low-loves, works like an oil introduced into the roots of that tree or poisons injected in its bark or blast of fire directed against it.

TEACHER.—I wish the sublimity of altruistic love may dawn on mankind and the horror of low-hates may terrify it. The whole attempt of moral culture and spiritual training should be directed to the evolution of altruistic loves and the weeding out of low-hates.

## ALTRUISTIC LOVE FOR GREAT MEN

A STUDENT.—Sir, you have dealt with love in domestic relations, love for the under-dog and the down-trodden suffering mankind. Does love take any other form also ?

TEACHER.—Altruistic love takes many forms. There is love for a hero. It comes the way of reverence. Love of Boswell for Dr. Johnson was of that type. Love of Mahadev Desai for Gandhiji was also of that type. Love of soldiers for their loved hero (i.e., the General) is of that type. Abraham Lincoln enjoyed that love of soldiers on a vast scale. When the news of his base assassination spread, one camp, that consisted of ten thousand soldiers received the news with such a shock and pain that all the ten thousand soldiers wept like women and lamentations went forth from that big camp.

A STUDENT,—What is the basis of this kind of love ?

TEACHER.—It is based on admiration, appreciation or reverence for any grand virtue of a hero.

A STUDENT.—Why does not every person worship the same hero ?

TEACHER.—Laws of inequality and variation make that improbable or even impossible. Every person cannot attract every other person. Our mental make-up composed of hereditary powers and fashioned by different environments, mould our mental dispositions in various and different ways. Hence our hearts are fit to receive certain things and not others.

A STUDENT.—Is hero worship essential ?

TEACHER.—It is. It is by hero-worship that a hero multiplies into many. By love and worship of a hero, we assimilate his virtues and thus his virtues become a nation's capital. Theodore Parker was a hero to many and they carried on the banner of his cause after his death and made Theodore's love for the freedom of slaves an institution. There was nationwide feeling to liberate slaves. One Nelson has given to

England thousands of naval heroes and the nation is charged with Nelson's virtues. Gandhiji's unbounded love to free his country from foreign domination aroused an army of self-sacrificing youngmen to carry the fight to a successful finish. Nations grow by assimilating the virtues of heroes. Those nations which do not produce heroes or those nations, which are lacking in hearts to appreciate heroes, grovel on earth. There should, therefore, be as many festivals to celebrate the birthdays of heroes as possible.

A STUDENT.—What is the difference, Sir, between hero-worship and Guru-worship ?

TEACHER.—In hero-worship there is no spiritual devotion. Courage of a high order, heroic sacrifices for a noble cause, extraordinary acts of benevolence, a singular act of alleviating pain of others, makes the possessors of such virtues heroes for others. But when we seek soul-welfare and soul-evolution and find any one able enough to quench such a thirst we accept him as a Guru. I have mentioned before that Anand worshipped Buddha, Paul worshipped Christ, Guru Angad Dev worshipped Nanak Dev, Guru Arjan Dev worshipped his father as Guru and Bulleshah worshipped his hero as his Guru.

A STUDENT.—Should we worship a Guru ?

TEACHER.—It is a curious question. So long as men born with spiritual needs do exist in the world and continue to be so born, Guru-worship shall not only remain but flourish. Just take my own case. At the age of 18, I was a rank atheist. Atheism is said to be the negation of worship. It is a foolish idea. I had mental conflicts. The dawn of youthful passion was not a pleasurable thing for me as it led me to have lustful thoughts. I felt I was getting dirty in heart. No thought ever materialized into action. But thought itself was a torture to me. I saw a great man. His sublime purity, his extraordinary detachment, his heroic stand against wrong public opinion, his touching tenderness, so deeply affected me that to keep my head at his feet was a heavenly privilege to me. I gave up all associations with others and began to live with him. I used to worship him. I did not know that he too was a disciple. I felt, then, that after completing my education, I would promulgate his virtues in the world. He wrought a marvellous change in me.

A STUDENT.—Who was he ?

TEACHER.—He was Bhai Mohan Devji—a worker of the Dev Samaj and disciple of Bhagwan Devatma. This is why when I learnt of this fact and had a *darshan* of Bhagwan Devatma, I was won forever. Now, did I argue myself into discipleship ? My inner craving to get out of the control of lust, greed, slavery to wrong associates and public opinion, and selfishness made me find a resting place in Him. My ship of life reached a haven, a safe port.

A STUDENT.—Did you succeed in fulfilling your cravings ?

TEACHER.—Yes, I did and beyond my wildest expectations. Not I alone but many in my society can tell you why they have come to worship Bhagwan Devatma. They were never brought to the fold by arguments. By their intense attraction for the highest soul-evolving influences they came to the portals of spiritual life and never thereafter retreated.

A STUDENT.—So according to you, our spiritual needs lead us to seek the object of our own fulfilment.

TEACHER.—Indeed so.

A STUDENT.—Whom do you consider the safest guide in spiritual matters ?

TEACHER.—I have found my haven of life at the feet of my Master because I feel that He has removed my soul-darkness and given to me true knowledge of soul and because He has created in me the horror of low-life and rescued me from certain low-loves and made me a servant of mankind.

A STUDENT.—For what purposes do we need a Guru ?

TEACHER.—*For showing us our inner life as it is, for delivering us from lust, greed, self-love, vanity, selfishness etc., and for evolving in us noble and altruistic loves so that our entire world of interest may be the welfare of others.*

A STUDENT.—I have heard that Gurudom has destroyed the world.

TEACHER.—It is an exaggerated and distorted view. It is true, taking advantage of the superstitions and credulity of millions, cheats pose as Gurus and harm them. But as base coins do not dispense with the need of true coins, existence of quacks does not dispense with the need of doctors, existence of magicians does not dispense with the need of scientists, alchemists with the need of chemists, sooth-sayers with the need

astronomers etc., etc., so existence of cheats does not dispense with the need of true Guru.

A STUDENT.—Can we not dispense with the need of a Guru ?

TEACHER.—As you cannot dispense with the need of teachers in schools and college, doctors and nurses in hospitals and dispensaries, so you cannot dispense with the need of spiritual healers or saviours or gurus.

A STUDENT.—There are so many, Sir, who have no guru, who do not go to any church or temple, who offer no prayers, read no *nimaz*, peruse no scriptures, turn no beads etc., and they are quite good citizens and house-holders.

TEACHER.—One can be a good citizen and householder and yet be a slave to soul-darkness and chained to low-loves and law-hates and be a selfish person.

A STUDENT.—What are the harmful effects of all these ?

TEACHER.—You know as we change in body so we change in soul. Our thoughts and actions immediately change us. If our thoughts and acts are bad they develop evil forces in our hearts and accumulate poison there. These tumours on soul, called evil forces, have to be operated upon. Our accumulated impurities have to be washed out. Noble forces have to grow in us or we would face a grim fate.

A STUDENT.—What is that grim fate ?

TEACHER.—The fate of perversion of vision and loss of moral and spiritual vitality.

A STUDENT.—What do you mean by perversion of vision ?

TEACHER.—A vision is said to be perverted when it sees truth as untruth and vice versa or sees evil as good and good as evil. A man who takes bribes thinks he is profiting when, in fact, he is developing an evil force in his heart—a tumour. A man commits the filthy offence of adultery. He corrupts his soul. A man butchers animals or subsists on their corpses. He hardens his soul. Does he realize that ? A man takes to intoxicants. He blinds his soul. Does he feel this loss ? He does not. This is his mental perversion. He judges himself by wealth, position, power, affluence, etc., and not by inner character which, in fact, constitutes the true "he."

A STUDENT.—How does he lose moral and spiritual vitality ?

TEACHER.—Such a man gradually loses power of resisting the attack of evil heart forces, as also of standing by any higher principle of life. Like a straw he is at the mercy of the winds of evil forces. He never grows into a moral power in his family or his community, or his country.

A STUDENT.—What a loss !

TEACHER.—Indeed so.



## LOVE SUBLIME

A STUDENT.—Sir, among all the different kinds of love, which would you call the love sublime ?

TEACHER.—The psychology of love is the same. It is the extreme form of attraction and attachment. It is called low when the end it attaches to is low. Love for money is a low-love. Love for sex-pleasure is a low-love. Love for idleness, sloth, bodily ease and comfort is a low-love. Love for intoxicants is a low-love. Love for children as children, which is called *moha* is a low-love. Love for name, fame, power and position is a low-love. Love for self is a low-love.

Love for removing pain and sorrow of another is a higher love as the end is higher. Love for removing ignorance and spreading the light of knowledge is a higher love as the end to be achieved is higher. Love for rescuing men from various gross sins and crimes such as the use of intoxicants, intemperance, over-indulgence, adultery, suppression of debts and deposits, killing of animals for food, sport and trade etc., is a higher love, as it serves higher end of saving the enslaved sinners. Love for the discovery of a truth beneficial to mankind, a medicine helpful to mankind, a new method of industry, agriculture, architecture etc., is a higher love as it serves the purposes of human knowledge and welfare. Love to leave large benefices, gifts, trusts and institutions for the welfare of mankind is a higher love as it helps in the well-being and progress of mankind.

A STUDENT.—Which of them is love sublime ?

TEACHER.—None. Not a single one of them touches the frontiers and regions beyond that of body and intellect or social welfare. Body cannot be the supreme concern of man, nor can intellect be the supreme concern of man. Both these would fail to disentangle the knots due to wrong heart-forces. Both these cannot remove crime and disharmony. All contributions made by altruistic lovers to remove the bodily pain, disease,

suffering and sorrows of body are very valuable. In the same way all contributions for removing of ignorance, illiteracy and mental complexes are very valuable. But as soul is the supreme part of human individuality and its diseases are the most devastating factors in human existence and its health and higher evolution the most essential for building human relations on sound basis, all contributions made in the soul-world are the most precious. Love for him is not sublime but sublimest, whose mission in life is to remove soul darkness and slavery to low-loves and low-hates and to illumine and evolve soul-life.

A STUDENT.—So you believe that soul gets diseased !

TEACHER.—Yes, I do. Every slavery to a low-love or a low-hate is a disease. Lust, greed, vanity, jealousy, vindictiveness, selfishness etc., all these are destructive forces, and are, therefore, moral and spiritual diseases. When these are present in any soul, love sublime can have no place. Even a touch of low life would be a torment to love sublime. This unique love is a most purifying force in man. Self-love—the mother of all sins, crimes and corruptions—has no place in or quarter with that love. When this sublime love dominates a man his world of experience changes altogether into some sort of divine experience.

A STUDENT.—How many forms this love sublime assumes ?

TEACHER.—As in women, so in a devotee, it assumes the form of mother love for the ideal. They love the supreme ideal or worship it as a mother. Look to the Vaishnavas. They worship their ideal as mother divine. There are, again, others who worship their beloved master as father. Do not Christians worship their God as Father in Heaven ? Some devotees find satisfaction of this love as being servants of the Lord. They call themselves *daas* or slaves or servants. Some love their master as a friend. Arjuna worshipped Krishna—his ideal. But he was his friend also.

But whatever form this love takes *it must blast materialism* in man. It must blast *worldliness* in man. It must produce shrinking from every corrupting thought or action as from a terrible reptile. *Love for the highest ideal cannot co-exist with corrupt or worldly life.* They are fools who think lust can co-exist with love sublime or greed can co-exist with love sublime or vanity and selfishness can co-exist with love sublime.

St. Francis of Assisi among Christians showed some potency of this love sublime. St. Clara who was devoted more to Francis as ideal of her heart than to any body else, displayed extraordinary cleanliness of life. St. Mira—called the *mutwali*—showed the alchemy of this love.

In our society the revered Dr. Kumari Prem Devi and Pandit Parmeshwar Dutt lived to the grandeur of this sublime love.

A STUDENT.—Then Dev Samaj teaches and emphasises the value of this love sublime !

TEACHER.—It does. The Dev Samaj worships Devatma. Worship in its loftiest form is not possible without love sublime. The greatest blessing which this love gives us is that we find our highest satisfaction in whole-hearted devotion and pure service of all the kingdoms of Nature and our various relations. Love sublime has no meaning for us unless it flows into the highest service of others. Hence, we believe spirituality to consist in the love for Devatma and love for the highest service of mankind.

A STUDENT.—And this is what you teach.

TEACHER.—Indeed so.

A STUDENT.—So the highest love for your supreme ideal—the Devatma—and unalloyed and devoted love for the highest service of others, constitute highest spirituality for you.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. But everything highest has few customers in life. However, there are stages of worship. Reverence is the necessary feeling for worship and altruistic service is the minimum stage to step into spirituality.

A STUDENT.—How is it that though the world gives great illustrations of religious experiences, the modern man scoffs at them ?

TEACHER.—There has been nothing in the world which ignorant people have not scoffed at. But even then many enduring things have survived. Christ was crucified, but his glory as incarnation of mercy has outlived even the Cross. Mahtama Buddha was scoffed at as an irreligious person because God had no place in his theory of salvation, but as Lord of compassion he has survived. General Booth was even stoned but he has survived all that. Even his co-religionists and clergymen scoffed at him, but he has outlived them. Galileo

was imprisoned and he died in prison. Bruno was burnt alive. Charles Darwin was abused beyond measure. But all these have survived the arrow of slander, scandal and persecution. Enduring things must endure. They who are foolish enough not to welcome them must deserve the chapter of disgrace in human history.

A STUDENT.—Sir, do you think, truths relating to soul must survive ?

TEACHER.—Indeed so. When I have a soul, I must get knowledge about it. If I do not know my inner life; if I do not know the moral and spiritual character of thoughts I cherish and acts I do and am ignorant of how they mould my inner life; if I am content with life lacking in service of others; if I am satisfied with life of selfishness, vanity, self-will and low-hate ; if I do not realize how this ignorance degrades my soul every moment and how low life perverts my vision and hardens my heart and thereby vitiates my moral and spiritual vitality or power, who suffers ? I suffer. In Nature cause and effect are inseparable and inevitable. Soul-darkness and life chained to low passions must cause degradation—both moral and spiritual. No body can stop this effect. It is inevitable. I must be saved from this. Hence I need a saviour—a real saviour who himself is above all kinds of low life and who is an embodiment of complete and all-sided love of truth and goodness. Hence the highest Guru is needed for devotion and love sublime.

## MORAL PERVERSIONS

A STUDENT.—Sir, how to get peace of mind and higher happiness ?

TEACHER.—In this law-bound universe every phenomenon has a cause behind it which is immutable and universal. When a man loses his peace of mind and is precluded from enjoying higher happiness, there is a cause for it.

A STUDENT.—Kindly tell us the cause or causes which produce avoidable misery and destroy felicity of mind.

TEACHER.—All of you should please try to assimilate and realize this greatest and most important truth that man is not only a part of humanity but he is also a part of Nature. Hence he is deeply and inextricably related to all other parts. Hence if he thinks, feels and acts in such a way as to contribute towards the betterment of human and sub-human kingdoms, he fulfils the great and wonderful law or process of Evolution and enjoys the sweet felicity of mind. But, on the contrary if he thinks, feels and acts in a way so as to prove harmful to human and sub-human kingdoms, he runs counter to the process of Evolution and thus suffers most woeful consequences destructive of his higher peace of mind and his higher or divine happiness. By this course of conduct, he proves his own enemy and an enemy of the well-being of others. Above all, he vitiates his moral and spiritual vitality or constructive power of his soul.

A STUDENT.—Sir, what are the forces of human heart which make a man to feel, think and act prejudicially to his own welfare and to the welfare of others and thus walk the way of avoidable misery and loss of constructive power of soul ?

TEACHER.—They are called low loves and low hates.

A STUDENT.—What is their most prominent characteristic by which we can easily recognize them ?

TEACHER.—Their most prominent trait is that they lead a man to untruth and evil. All the falsehoods practised in the world and all the evils which have disfigured the face of huma-

nity are directly and inevitably due to the sway of these low loves and low hates on the human hearts.

A STUDENT.—Will you please give the various groups of these low loves and low hates ?

TEACHER.—They can be classified into eight groups, namely:

1. The bodily-pleasure-affording low loves of palate, intoxicants, sloth and lust.
2. The egoistic-pleasure-yielding low loves of praise (or flattery), name (or honour), self-aggrandisement ; and selfishness.
3. Pleasure-yielding low love of one's begotten children.
4. Pleasure-giving low love of acquisitiveness, i.e., low love of money and property.
5. Pleasure-giving low love of traditions, companions, habits or associations etc.
6. Pleasure-giving low love of violence consisting in an unprovoked annoyance of human beings or animals by teasing them, inflicting pain on them or positively hurting them etc.
7. Pleasure-giving low love of false or blind faith.
8. Pleasure-giving low hates of various kinds, such as jealousy, vindictiveness, active revenge and low hates arising out of racial, communal, religious and political prejudices and predilections.

A STUDENT.—These low loves and low hates rule almost every hamlet or hut, village or town, country or land, race or nation. Do you think these heart-forces necessarily destroy true and higher peace of mind and all kinds of higher or divine happiness ?

TEACHER.—Indeed so.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly describe the inevitable result of the sovereign sway of these low loves and low hates ?

TEACHER.—These low loves and low hates produce *perversion of vision*. These leads to terrible consequences. Those suffering from this jaundiced state take wrong for right, evil for good, untruth for truth, an enemy for a friend.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate this horrible state ?

TEACHER.—There was a man who used to attend our meetings. He was a heavy bribes-taker. But in the moral and spiritual atmosphere of our society, he underwent great change.

He left that evil habit. This produced consternation in his family circles. We were all happy that the man had shaken off the incubus of this evil force. He himself also felt a relief and a great peace of mind.

But his wife and children and other relatives could not see the beauty of honesty and valued dishonesty as it brought a lot of money to them. So they began to call in the help of so-called great religious preachers. They started influencing him the wrong way. They told him to ask me as to what would he gain after death by making such a palpable sacrifice of ill-gotten money. So he came to me and put me a direct question, "What would I gain, Sir, after death by being honest?" I replied, "My friend, why should you wait for such a delayed and uncertain result? You have already got the blessed result and sweet fruit." He was silent and then said, "Sir, I do not know what sweet fruit I have got? All that I know is that I have sacrificed a lot of money?"

I replied, "My friend, you have become honest and hence you have got purity of soul-life in this one aspect. Your heart is throbbing with relief and joy at the idea that you harm none. What you call loss of money is a strange perversion of truth. Money was not yours. You took advantage of your position to rob others. You are saved from that evil."

But his so-called friends and religious guides had succeeded in perverting his mind to such an extent that he began to value dishonesty over honesty, his evil friends over his true benefactors.

A STUDENT.—Did he again take to dishonesty?

TEACHER.—Yes, he did and thus a wolf was let loose to rob and harm mankind.

A STUDENT.—Does honesty bring peace of mind?

TEACHER.—It does. A clerk of a court was changed by the higher influences of our society. It was a miracle that he changed. He had resisted all my efforts to make him give up dishonest ways. Another worker succeeded with him. I felt happy at this. I asked him what the change of heart had done for him. He said something which I describe in my words. He said:

"Shrimanjee! When I used to take bribes, I never enjoyed either leisure or sleep. At every leisure hour I would think of

ways and means to wring the greatest amount from the parties to a suit. At night I would go on thinking and thinking about new ways till mental exhaustion would bring sleep to me. But if at any time, I would wake up, these thoughts would assail me and thus I was a constant victim. Again, when I went to office and did not get the expected amount from the parties, I would feel tortured and would have recourse to intrigues so as to harm these persons who had given me less. One day, somebody getting tired of my sinfulness to him, sent an anonymous complaint to the judge. The judge called me. He showed the application to me. He said, 'I know you take bribes. I feel helpless in suppressing corruption. But this much I tell you that I would not take notice of your malpractice, so long as there are no complaints against you. If you let a storm rise against you, I would let the law have its course against you.' I was frightened out of my wits. I perspired. All these experiences which made me live *a life of hell* could not make me give up dishonesty. This is because all those around me took bribes and I had no horror of this evil practice. Now that I have awakened to the ugliness of this evil, I cannot yield to it. Now I am enjoying sound and undisturbed sleep. My conscience is clear. Hence my words carry weight. I have learnt to help others. The court birds are not weary of singing my praise. I do not hurt. I help. I value this. Hence my old perversion of mind has changed, giving rise to sanity."

A STUDENT.—So one way to have peace of mind is not to covet things which do not belong to us by right.

TEACHER.—True. Jesus Christ is said to have taught, "Covet not the thing that belongeth to another". In Buddhist literature we read, "All thirst for things impermanent produces the greatest suffering." Hindu sages teach that all lusts for things impermanent ignite unquenchable fire of misery and sufferings. Our society teaches that all low loves and low hates produce, besides other evils, perversion of mind and hence mental and moral insanity and various kinds of sufferings.



## MORAL SLAVERY

A STUDENT.—Sir, I have followed the trend of your reasoning in so far that perversion of mind cannot but banish our peace of mind and annihilate higher happiness. How can we find joy of health when we take food for poison and poison for food. Similarly, how can we find peace of mind when owing to perversion we take untruth for truth and truth for untruth, goodness for evil and evil for goodness, benefactors for enemies and enemies for benefactors etc. ? I hope I have caught your point.

TEACHER.—You have. In human organism, soul is the most essential part. It is the architect and directing influence of body. If this architect becomes blind, it must prove disastrous for the felicity and higher happiness of mind.

A STUDENT.—Sir, please describe other forms of insanity of soul which lead to destruction of peace of mind and divine happiness.

TEACHER.—When the soul is dominated by bodily-pleasure-affording low loves of taste, intoxicants, lust etc., it becomes, to start with, *intemperate*. This intemperance leads to bodily diseases. There have been several instances in which this intemperance has caused incalculable pain. There was a worker of Dev Samaj who died at the age of over 70 years. In 1905, when he was 35 years old he developed severe stomach trouble. He had been suffering from it since years. All kinds of medicines had failed to give him relief. He consulted an eminent physician about his malady. The latter knew the Dev Samaj. He told him, "My man, if you have joined such a society, I guarantee you 20 years longer life and the cure of your disease." He was surprised to hear this, for he was, then, a new recruit. He did not quite catch the physician's point. However, when he joined, in 1905, the Academy called the Higher Life-evolving Academy of our society, he had already announced that he would pay Rs. 500 to him who would cure him of this painful malady. He attended the sessions for two years

and besides undergoing changes for higher life, he got cured of the malady. He paid Rs. 500 to the Academy.

A STUDENT.—Did he get any curatives in that Academy ? Has it a hospital of its own ?

TEACHER.—If by curative you mean any medicine, he got none. If by hospital you mean any ordinary hospital where bodily diseases are treated, the Academy had no such benevolent institution attached to it.

This unique Academy treated his soul. It awakened in him higher consciousnesses and higher capacities. He witnessed his intemperate habits in their true but horrid form and got power to shake off their control. Hence his body, now free from the torment of intemperance, began to function healthfully. He got cured. He then devoted his entire life to our society. He lived more than 35 years after the cure of his chronic state when in utter dejection and helplessness he had declared that he would die prematurely of that stomach trouble.

He got peace of mind, for bodily disease and intemperance, which had worried him most, left him and he started a life of self-forgetfulness.

I myself saw how even after completing his seventieth year, he worked like a young man and as long as he breathed on this earth, his mind proved alert and his moral powers preponderant.

Thus, if we get free from all such low loves which produce intemperance due to moral slavery, we shall get that peace of mind which is destroyed by such a low life.

A STUDENT.—According to you, Sir, intemperance is due to certain low loves.

TEACHER.—Positively yes. There is before me the case of a man who had squandered away his fortune, ruined his health, destroyed his home and happiness, and felt his own life a burden to himself because he had become addicted to drinking. In his sane moments, he wept over his condition, but like a rat in the mouth of a cat, he felt helpless. Can you expect such a man to have peace of mind and derive happiness ?

A STUDENT.—Of course not. How can a slave to an evil habit of mind have peace of mind ?

TEACHER.—Allied to the above diseases, there is another disease which low loves and low hates produce. This consists

in loss of liberty and bondage to evil life.

A STUDENT.—How does such a man lose his liberty ?

TEACHER.—The example given above of the drunkard is there to give you an idea of the slavery to evil habit of a lost soul. Take another true case of a man who had two sons—both M.A.'s. One of them died. The father was in Government service. He received such a shock that he lost control over himself. He would go to office but could do no work. Arrears began to pile up. His boss tried to take him out of that helplessness. But he failed. He had, therefore, to dispense with his services. Even the loss of maintenance could not shake him up from his moral stupor. He lived and died in that stunned and stupified state. This did not restore his dead son to him. His mentally paralysed condition neither helped him nor did his dear ones. He lost his life. But he could not shake off his slavery to the low-love of a child. Can such a slave enjoy peace of mind ?

Two sons of a widow died by being buried under a fallen roof. When she heard about this tragedy, she lost her sanity. For years she would go and stand on the road asking school children if her two sons were coming back from school. Could such a slave enjoy peace of mind ? She lost even the balance of mind.

A great European General of an army lost his wife on whom he doted. After a few months the world was startled to hear that he had shot himself dead. He left a letter saying : "I have tried hard to overcome grief but I have failed. I find relief in suicide."

This General passed months in mental hell. Could such a slave to the low-love for his wife find peace of mind ?

I was present when a young stalwart sportsman—a college student—died of typhoid. He was married and he had a young wife. This wife was a slave to her love for him. When he died, she said addressing me, "I shall go to him. I cannot live without him. Before the first anniversary of his death, I shall have departed for *parlok* to meet him." She had prophesied correctly. Before 12 months were over, she died. And how did she pass those 12 months ? Did she pass them in peace of mind ? Not at all. She passed her time in mental agony. Slavery to the low-love robbed her of her peace of mind.

Hence low-love for wife or husband or children produces a slavery which banishes peace of mind. It creates a hell which produces fire of misery and consumes divine happiness.

A STUDENT.—I understand the truth that intemperance and slavery to domestic ties rob us of peace of mind. Is there any other cause also which destroys peace of mind ?

TEACHER.—Greed for money and possessions or low feeling of acquisitiveness also produces avoidable misery and loss of bodily health and life.

When I was in college, I saw a half-demented man who had put on rings made of cloth on all his fingers, and a cloth necklace. He eked out his maintenance by doing the work of filling jars of water for others. I asked my grandmother the reason of that strange conduct of the demented man. She said : "My son, this man was returning from Bokhara (Russia) with a heavy pile of gold. On the way he was robbed by dacoits. They took off all his rings and his necklace also. This loss cost him his senses and he finds delight in the make-belief by putting on cloth rings and cloth necklace."

In my town a case happened which has left indelible impression on me. A rich man got a telegram how his business had failed. He felt stunned and did not move from the spot where he lay till morning. He had black hair. In the morning his whole hair was grey. Such was the effect of his agony of mind.

I know of a case of a wealthy man who confessed that several nights he could not get sleep because on a slight sound made even by a rat he would go to his room where the safe was kept, open it and count all the money and then return. Sometimes, he had to get up three or four times a night. Can greed give a man peace of mind ? It can only give insomnia.

When I was in college, one day the news spread that a Mayor had shot himself dead. He was a multi-millionaire. But he had forged certain documents. He had kept up false appearances and diverted lots of funds of others to himself as they trusted him. His business began to show signs of cracking. He saw that his frauds would be exposed. He found relief in suicide. The greed and feeling of acquisitiveness led him to paths and bye-lanes which destined him to a life of misery. Our low loves destroy our peace of mind as surely as

poison affects our body prejudiciously.

So in order to dream of peace of mind and higher happiness we have to get out of the slavery to greed and unquenchable spirit of acquisitiveness. We should not expect ourselves to remain unscroched when we set the whole house on conflagration. In the same way it is foolish to expect peace of mind by adding fuels to the fire of low loves.

## VAIN HOPES

A STUDENT.—Is there any other cause also which robs man of his peace of mind and higher happiness ?

TEACHER.—Frustrated hopes lead to disappointments, despair, mental agonies and sometimes even death.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly describe a few out of such frustrated hopes ?

TEACHER.—Some of the frustrated hopes which give terrible heart-shocks are :—

1. Failure to get a bride or bridegroom in marriage.
2. Failure to get one's own children after the wedlock.
3. Failure to get a son or a male heir.
4. Failure to reach the target in wealth which a man longs to possess.
5. Failure to get the social or political position one thirsts after.
6. Failure to pass any competitive examination held for some higher posts in the Government.
7. Failure to get that girl for a wife whom one simply dies to possess or failure to get a boy as a husband whom one loves madly.
8. Failure to receive appreciation from that class whose appreciation one deeply desires to have and possess.
9. Failure to get employment.
10. Failure to get rid of some chronic trouble or chronic physical malady.
11. Failure to get that loyalty from one's wife or husband which one deeply desires to have.
12. Failure to find one's relation, child, friend or an obliged one's showing fidelity or faith or finding him, on the contrary, betrayer of faith and trust.
13. Failure to see such of one's hopes realized which one entertained about some one proving helpful and serviceable.

14. Failure to get that response of love from any person which one longs to have.

These and hundreds of other such failures give us shocks of heart which often prove unbearable.

A STUDENT.—Sir, hopes deferred, hopes frustrated or hopes brought to nought, make the heart sick and produce a state of disappointment which often ends in tragedy. I find in the list you have given that all these frustrations are of such hopes as are not fundamental and can be called secondary. They are based on self and are directly due to low-loves and low-hates.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. I have seen great tragedies perpetrated by such frustrated hopes. Only this year a college student was found dead in his room, having committed suicide. He left a few lines purporting to say that his unrequited love for a girl was the cause of his death. A fine young man once studied in a college of which I was the Principal. He expected money from his father whose second wife was not favourably inclined towards the young man. He was well employed. He had no particular need of his patrimony. But this tortured him. Its frustration led him to lay violent hands on his father's life.

A reader of a court was a notorious bribes-taker who used to mercilessly fleece people. He was superseded by a subrodinate who was comparatively less dishonest and more painstaking. The frustration made the reader writhe in agony. When he came to me, it was hard to rescue him out of the self-ignited fire in which he was being consumed. I found him in that state for days on end.

Before the Second World War there was terrible unemployment in the country. This took the lives of several disappointed persons. Ingratitude of Brutus broke the heart of Caesar. I read a true story of an angelic man who had married his playmate. They lived together for years. They had a number of children. Then it was that this middle-aged woman lost her heart to a wealthy merchant who had come as a guest of her husband. She eloped away with him. This gave such a shock to the husband that he pined away to death. This faithless woman yearned for her children. She even wrote to them to correspond with her. They flatly refused. Her son wrote to her, "Mother, you have mangled my faith in loyalty of woman—not a small loss to me! I want to have nothing to do with

you". This disappointment robbed the woman of the heaven she supposed she had built by marrying a man who had awakened a flame of new love in her and who studied her unexpressed wishes and fulfilled them. An English poet died broken hearted because the critics cruelly criticized him when he expected appreciation from them. I have come across several wealthy men who have enough to live like princes and yet they pass miserable lives because they have not amassed their pile according to their expectations.

A fine young man died, to the greatest disappointment of his parents, because his wife administered to him some medicine taken from a sadhu who promised her an issue if her husband took that medicine. She was issueless.

I know of women taking medicines or consulting Brahmins in order to get sons, as all their children are daughters.

I had gone to a women's hospital where one of my relatives was confined. She had four girls. She expected a son. She again, got a daughter. And she burst into tears. So did all her four daughters. It was a most melancholy sight.

A wealthy man's wife had no child. By chance she got one. She pinned all her hopes and joys on him. At the age of three the child died. She followed him a year after to an early grave.

A highly educated girl has not been able to get a suitable bridegroom. Her anxiety to get settled is so acute that it has robbed her of all her peace of mind. Only lately a double graduate girl married. Before she married, she had everything to be happy. But this one unsatisfied desire so much poisoned her life that one day she said, "I don't know why I am alive ! What for should I live ?" This was her attitude while hundreds others envied her educational qualifications and her good job.

It was a Commander-in-Chief of a large army who committed suicide because a note was made on his career which he felt as a black mark.

By vain hopes we build our life and joy on sand. Hence when these hopes are unrealized, we lose both life and joy. All these hopes whose frustration causes agony of mind are either for money or for wife or husband or for children, specially son or for name and fame, for a job or promotion or for a response to our undue love for others or for such other low



things. To build the super-structure of our life and hopes on such low-loves and low-hates is to get consumed in the fire of disappointments and lose all peace of mind and all kinds of higher happiness. It is sad that millions live such a life. In soul-darkness they cannot see the horror of such a life. They are consumed by the self-lit fires.

## LOW-HATES

A STUDENT.—You have told us that moral perversion, moral slavery and vain hopes rob us of our peace of mind. Is there any other cause also which destroys peace of mind ?

TEACHER.—Jealousy is another great factor in throwing man into fires of misery and thereby destroying his peace of mind.

A STUDENT.—Kindly define jealousy.

TEACHER.—When a man's egoistic love is developed to such an extent that he *cannot tolerate* anyone else save himself, to be praised even for a real virtue (though he himself relishes his own false praise) and *feels upset* and considerably pained by it ; or when he *feels shocked* and miserable, on finding another person more highly placed in life or more prosperous and happy, he is said to suffer from jealousy.

A STUDENT.—This indeed is a most terrible malady of soul !

TEACHER.—Indeed so. It is the one force that runs absolutely counter to the unique process of evolution. This process shall invariably give us better, higher, more harmonious and less incomplete and more progressive things and persons. No body can stop this process. And a jealous man finds in the progress and happiness of others a constant source of pain and misery. *As he can't stop the eternal process of evolution and its beautiful fruits, he will be subject to eternal torture.* How can, then, a jealous person find peace of mind ? Higher happiness shall always be foreign to him as he experiences misery in the progress of others.

Rose is there to be admired and not to be jealous of. He who is jealous of flowers would embrace constant misery as flowers shall be there and they shall blossom.

A STUDENT.—Is jealousy a common disease ?

TEACHER.—Leaving certain exceptions, it has proved almost a universal malady. A Hindu sage has said :—

*Kanchan tajna sehaj hai, sehaj triya ka neh,  
Maan, badaai, eersha durlabh tajni yeh.*

[It is easy to renounced love of money and woman, but it is a rare thing for human beings to renounce love of fame and name, love of self-aggrandisement and jealousy.]

This terrible green-eyed monster has proved the death of great causes and great organizations in the world. The tragedy is that a jealous person is unaware of his slavery to this evil force and passes before the world as a crusader against evil when in fact he is an enemy of all that is good and beautiful.

A STUDENT.—Sir, is there any other heart-force which destroys our peace of mind ?

TEACHER.—Vindictiveness or feeling of revenge burns up our peace of mind.

A STUDENT.—What is meant by vindictiveness ?

TEACHER.—A person suffers from the malady of vindictiveness if he feels shocked when someone has not gratified his desire or fulfilled his expectation and resolves or instigates another to resolve to harm him or get him harmed and thus avenge himself on him.

When this infernal feeling awakens in the heart of a man—and it is found in the hearts of millions—against any body, even his great benefactor, he feels a burning sensation and gets miserable. If this feeling gets strong in him, he talks about it to others and openly declares that the hell-fire in his heart won't subside till he inflicts some palpable and serious harm on the object of his revenge or even kill him outright.

A STUDENT.—What a hellish feeling this !

TEACHER.—Indeed it is. Imaginative people have created some external places called hell, even which cannot possibly stand comparison with a heart burning with revenge.

A STUDENT.—Here is an internal hell-fire lit up and fed by jealousy and vindictiveness which is real and verifiable and which is consuming millions of hearts. Why is not human attention directed to this ?

TEACHER.—People have come to believe in the reality of external punishment. They do not realize that the greatest punishment or reward lies in the growth of infernal or blessed forces—the former create hell and the latter create heaven in our soul-life.

Two brothers lived in a *tehsil* town. One of them found his real brother a thorn in his side because he would not gratify his low desires. So he hired a gang of rogues who broke into his house and killed every member of that family. They were in all eleven members. This case went to court.

In another place, a servant got offended with his master. He got so drunken with the feeling of revenge that with his own hands he murdered his boss and all his family members. This case also went to court.

These cases have happened in recent years and they were well-planned and well-thought out acts. They show how these persons, obsessed by this feeling had to pass through hellish experience and their burning and pain were so acute that they could find relief only in bloodshed.

It is recorded in our history that a Hindu adolescent fell in love with a Muslim girl. They could not marry unless both adopted the same faith. There was no Civil Marriage Act to save them. The girl and her parents were agreeable that she may adopt Hindu faith. The boy was told so. He went to his parents. They were orthodox. Hindus could not accept a Muslim girl in their fold. The present day reformed Hindu sects had not been born which could take her in the Hindu fold. The boy got furious as his wish was not gratified. He went and embraced Islam. He rose to a great position in his army. Once he led his men against some principality. He conquered it. He vented his spleen on Hindus with extraordinary force and fury. He converted thousands by force and put to sword those who had the impudence, from his vindictive point of view, not to embrace his new faith.

Vain expectations or desires that are foiled, awaken in low and base hearts this monstrous force and it goes on creating hell for the man till he gratifies it by injuring and harming the object of his revenge. For years this new convert had been burning with revenge. His peace of mind was gone. Even after this monstrous act his peace of mind could not have been restored.

A STUDENT.—Why, Sir ? Was it not enough that his feeling of revenge was satisfied ?

TEACHER.—A lower feeling when gratified becomes a

greater tyrant, as fire fed by fuel kindles fiercer in its consuming flames.

A STUDENT.—Why should persons kindle this low feeling in their hearts ?

TEACHER.—Because it gives them low pleasure and it does not show its infernal nature to them.

A STUDENT.—Is there any other force or feeling of heart which destroys our peace of mind ?

TEACHER.—Abnormally developed feeling of ego, vanity or self-love is another base force.

A STUDENT.—How does it work ?

TEACHER.—It deludes the egoistic person into a wrong belief that he is superior in some department of life to those who are *in fact* in every way superior to him and it blinds him to such an extent that even in such departments of knowledge in which he is as ignorant as a newly born babe, he believes himself superior to those who are experts in that line. Thus deluded and blinded, he becomes so sensitive on matters touching his ego that if any one complains of his true defect to any of his benefactors or tries to awaken him to his grave lapses even, he feels terribly upset and rolls like a fish out of water. He hates such a friend or benefactor.

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly illustrate it ?

TEACHER.—There was a student known to me. He had that obsession. One day his teacher plucked him in a subject in which quite wrongly, he felt he was infallible. Years passed and still this student never forgave his teacher and always talked ill of him. Years of this wrong life have poisoned his life. But he is unobservant of this unfortunate trait.

More than thirty years ago, one M.A. came to a great journalist who had got no academic degree. He requested that journalist to train him. The latter thought that this M.A., was humble enough to bear his criticism. He was given a book to translate. He translated it. The journalist found it unsatisfactory and preferred the translation by another M.A. This proved the end of that young man's ambition to be a writer. But that was not enough. For years he remembered that great man with a feeling of hatred and thus he had kindled in his heart a constant flame to destroy his peace of mind. The vain and egoistic persons possess a sensitive sore in their soul which

aches at every gust of passing wind.

There was a magistrate who had such an abnormal feeling of ego that he could not bear any criticism even from his superior officers. His terrible sensitiveness cost him not only peace of mind but even progress in life. His constant theme was the abuse of his officers. He seemed to have no other interesting subject to talk about. His listeners, therefore, used to avoid him.

The species of grumblers, grouzers and slanderers is the direct product of ego or vanity or self-love.

A STUDENT.—With so many and various causes to disturb and destroy his peace of mind, how can man expect to have it so long as these causes are present ?

TEACHER.—True ! this is the reason why miseries and sufferings abound.

A STUDENT.—How can one get freedom from these various diseases of mind or soul ?

TEACHER.—Man generally craves after lower pleasures. By satisfying such a craving repeatedly, he develops that craving into a love. Various forms of such low-loves and their resultant low-hates are the direct causes of the soul-degradation of man and hence cost him his peace of mind. Now, so long as man does not develop aversion to these various forms of low-loves and low-hates, he will stick to them and he will have to reap hell-fire for himself and others.

A STUDENT.—How to create such aversions for low-loves and low-hates in oneself ?

TEACHER.—One must get the *subline light* or *Deva Jyoti* which might reveal to him the ugly and reprehensible form of low-loves and low-hates which, in his soul blindness, he views as attractive and fascinating.

Besides the sublime light, he must get *sublime power* or *Deva Tej* also in order to develop ability to cast off his bondage to them.

Unless he gets both these blessings, he would never feel even a desire to break the bonds of lower life.

A STUDENT.—Whence to get these blessings ?

TEACHER.—We can have them from one whom Nature has evolved for this purpose.

A STUDENT.—Who is that unique manifestation ?

TEACHER.—We in Dev Samaj, believe our most worshipful Master, Bhagwan Devatma to be such a manifestation. He was born with hereditary sublime forces in their germ state which he evolved by unique surrenders and unique sacrifices. By evolution of these forces he has been able to generate that unique light which reveals to us our inner life and that unique power which liberates us from various forms of bondages.

A STUDENT.—Can all persons get that light and power from him ?

TEACHER.—No, only fit persons can assimilate them and that also if they get suitable environments.

A STUDENT.—So you believe in the law of heredity and the law of environment.

TEACHER.—Yes, I do. A child owes a lot to his parents and immediate and distant ancestors. He is born in society and hence he cannot escape the law of environment. A fit soul is one who is able to receive this unique light and power and who actually develops higher aversions for low-loves and low-hates.

If a man desires true peace of mind, he must free himself from the infernal forces of low-loves and low-hates.

## INCREASING ONE'S QUALIFICATIONS

TEACHER.—I want to give you a talk today on a very ordinary but very useful topic for us all. It is based on the necessity of increasing one's value and utility.

A STUDENT.—This is plain in itself, and needs hardly any serious talk.

TEACHER.—Every subject which is of some interest to man is worth a serious thought. The subject no doubt looks simple enough, but it needs some education. There are millions of persons who hanker for things they do not deserve and burn in the hell-fire of disappointment when they do not get them.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate this ?

TEACHER.—You find a lot of advertisements in the "Wanted" columns wherein it is definitely put down that graduates alone need apply but no third class graduates need apply. The advertisements of this kind are clear enough. And yet non-graduates apply for the posts intended for graduates and third class graduates apply for posts not intended for them. The result is that they meet with disappointment and then abuse the persons who had advertised the posts. Here, they clearly show by their conduct that they do not seriously feel the great necessity of increasing their personal value and utility by hard work.

A STUDENT.—This is strange !

TEACHER.—This is natural enough. Human soul is ordinarily so egoistic that he considers himself qualified enough for a large number of the best jobs. He has his own standard of judging about his own merits. According to that standard, he gives himself best certificates of merit and is miserable if others do not accept his own certificate about himself.

A STUDENT.—Kindly illustrate this.

TEACHER.—Two students—a boy and a girl—were studying in the same school and were neighbours. School friendship sprang up between them. They grew romantic about each



other and in their foolish moments pledged to marry. They did not consult their parents at all. They foolishly felt no need of their approval. Both matriculated. The boy was not financially strong enough to go for college education. The girl, however, went for higher education. She passed Intermediate Arts in course of time. Her improved prospects and further experience of life cooled her ardour for the so-called lover. But the boy still believed that though he was merely a matriculate, he was good enough for that girl who was more qualified. She then passed B.A. And yet the boy dreamt that as a mere matriculate, he was qualified enough for her. He proposed to her. She refused. She told him bluntly, "Forget the romantic follies of school days. Life is not a fancy. It is a fact. How do you expect me to link my destiny with you when I am a good enough match even for the best educated man?" They boy neither increased his value nor his utility and yet dreamt to have a girl who was almost the best educated girl in that locality and for whose hand men with foreign qualifications offered. His disappointment was intense. It made him almost a lunatic. He could not accept the fact that he was valueless in her eyes. But in his own eyes, he felt that he was the best qualified match for her. There were complications which sprang up. But the boy had to suffer humiliation. This was self-earned humiliation.

A STUDENT.—A very sad case indeed !

TEACHER.—I contrast this with another case.

There was a poor man's son. He was very forcefully attracted towards a rich man's daughter. He was not vain. He knew he was poor and he was not even a matric. He determined to increase his merit. He passed matric and joined a college. He then sent a message to the girl's mother through her cousin that he would feel grateful if she would wait till he graduated and then give him the hand of her daughter. The mother refused to grant the prayer of the boy and got her daughter married to a rich man's son in some college. He felt stung. But he was wise. He came to the conclusion that he would increase his merit to such an extent that the proud mother would feel it an honour to offer him her other daughter. Instead of wasting time in brooding over the disappointment, he applied himself to studies. He passed a very high exami-

nation. One day that proud mother called him and said, "Son, you wanted to marry my daughter. As she was grown up, I could not wait. The second daughter of mine is more beautiful than the first. I am prepared to give her hand to you if you accept her." It was then that the young man was satisfied. He abused none. He simply increased his merit. He became the object of admiration and envy.

A STUDENT.—This is a very inspiring case.

TEACHER.—I know an incident of the life of a great philanthropist of India. He was a poor man's son. It is said that one day he went to see somebody in the Executive Engineer's office of his place. He was a young boy. He saw the office chair vacant. He wanted to sit in it. He went and sat in it. The peon came in and saw the boy sitting in the chair. He strongly rebuked him. He felt shocked and said, "One day I shall occupy this chair !" This was not a vain boast. He went and studied and ultimately passed with distinction from Roorkee College. In course of time, he came and occupied that chair. This is called increasing one's value.

A STUDENT.—A wonderful instance indeed !

TEACHER.—There was a neighbour of mine. He had lost his father. His uncle took interest in his life. But he was fond of music and acting and he neglected studies. He passed middle and then gave up studies. He joined Railway service as a ticket collector on Rs. 15 a month. His class-mates who were good students passed matric and joined colleges. A batch of them were returning from their college in a train. This train halted at the station where that singer and actor served as a ticket collector. They called him in terms which were disrespectful. He felt stung. Instead of brooding over his injured self-respect and getting charged with low-hate for them, he came to a sudden and sacred resolve : "I must improve my prospects to such an extent that these arrogant friends should consider it an honour to speak with me in term of deep respect."

Equipped with this resolve, he resigned his post and appealed to his uncle to send him for education. He agreed. He joined matric class and in due course passed matric examination. He joined college and passed B.Sc. He went and joined an Engineering College and in the final test he stood first and

was at once taken in the All-India Service. This is how he won reputation in life. When the town arranged a procession to bring him in honour from the station after he had won the highest distinction, some of those young men who as students, had insulted him, also joined.

This is what I mean by increasing one's value.

A STUDENT.—Sir, this is very inspiring.

TEACHER.—I know of a girl. She is alive. She was not going to school. One day she went to see her girl companion who had returned from the boarding house of her high school where she studied. Her father was present when this un-educated girl went to see her. The father addressing his daughter's friend's said, "You illiterate girl, see what education has done for my daughter!" The girl said to me, "I felt deeply hurt. I came home crest-fallen. I brooded over my lot. Then I came to a sudden determination that I must join the high school my friend was schooling in and gain more laurels than she."

The girl went and joined the school. She kept up to her resolve. She went in for studies higher than her friend had and thus became an object of respect even in the eyes of the father of the girl who had rebuked her.

A STUDENT.—This was a fine case and specially on the part of a girl.

TEACHER.—Sex does not matter in these things. It is the *sense of honour* that helped all these persons. What I want to impress upon you is the fact that by increasing your value you can command respect. You can't force another person to respect you, because by your sense of vanity, you have placed yourself on some imaginary higher pedestal.

I give you one more example before I close today's talk. A rich man having an only daughter had, as if, purchased a poor widow's son, married him to his only daughter and kept him in his house. He educated him. The boy passed B.A. This boy was treated by his vain wife and her parents as a poor dependent whom they had given home and shelter out of pity. One day, he told his wife that all of them should not make him feel as if he was an earth-worm. The wife lost her sense of decency and out of vanity said, "Beggars should not be choosers." So saying, she left him. The boy sat down and wept at his condition. Out of the mysterious depth of his sub-

conscious mind came a sudden resolution to him, "I must deserve their respect and I cannot do so unless I shake off helplessness. Till then I shall be treated as an earth-worm." He left his father-in-law's house. He disappeared for some 5 or 6 years. After his long and continued absence, sense came to his wife and her parents. They advertised and engaged persons to trace him. He was not discovered. One day, he appeared poorly dressed before his wife. She fell at his feet and cried out her heart to him heaping curses on herself that she had hurt his feelings and appealed to him to excuse her. The boy simply said, "Are you prepared to leave your parental home and come and share with me my hut as my wife?" She said, "Yes". Both of them then went to her parents and put that proposition before them. They felt stunned. They had no other child. They felt that life without their girl would be an arid desert for them. But the boy was adamant. He rejected all their offers of luxury and happy home. He said, "I am going. If your daughter wishes to live with me in my house, she is welcome. But if she is not willing, I would lay no claim on her love and conjugal rights." So saying, he rose to leave the place. The girl immediately rose and requested him to take her with him. Both left. The young man had made a wonderful progress in these years of absence. He went to her in poor dress to test her devotion for him. When he took her to his mansion where servants were in attendance to greet them, she smiled and said, "Oh, so this the poor man's hut?" "Yes," he said smilingly, "This is the hut where you would live as a queen of your husband who is no longer an earth-worm." She felt the sting of the remarks once made by her but got gradually reconciled.

From this you can see that if you have to live as men worthy of respect, you should deserve the respect and not force it. A man who is out to increase his value is bound to make progress not only in earthly goods but even in the estimation of the world.

## INCREASING ONE'S UTILITY TO OTHERS

TEACHER.—In my last talk, I tried to show you by various examples, the necessity of increasing one's value if one wanted to command respect and progress in life. This subject is of absorbing interest to the youth of our land. Our young men often lose sight of the saying, "First deserve, then desire." Personal merit and personal achievements count most in life.

A STUDENT.—Indeed so, Sir. In the last talk, you made it clear to us, how by developing their merit, some young men, whose instances you quoted, succeeded in life. By such instances, it is clear to us that mere desire for a thing counts for nothing. By winning distinctions, one establishes one's claim to the fulfilment of one's desires. But does a man win through life by increasing one's utility to others? Kindly give examples to prove this.

TEACHER.—When I started independent practice, I wanted a peon for my office. A U.P. man came to me to offer his services. I asked him what wages he would demand. He forthwith replied, "Let me be engaged and serve you. I, then, leave it to you to give me whatever wages you decide to give me." The man, who had brought him to me, told me that I could give him a start of Rs. 8 a month. He joined my service. After one month, I felt that the man deserved better wages. I increased his pay. The reason was this : In the first place, he was a very willing worker. He never counted hours. Day and night, he was ever ready to do my bidding. In the second place, he had wonderful dispatch. He did everything very intelligently and thoroughly. He never considered any personal service of his master as too menial for him. He began to manage my household accounts. Within a few months, I gave him the key of my box and all money that came to me as fees. He was my cashier, accountant, manager and peon. Out of gratitude, I showered benefits on him. Here was a clear case of a peon who made himself so useful that when he went home, I felt his absence as a great void. He talked little but did most useful

work diligently and well.

A STUDENT.—Such servants are very rare.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Once a great man—head of a big organization—said in his address that India was complaining of unemployment while we people who want employees feel the dearth of capable employees. This is true. Men want more money for doing no work or the least amount of work. They believe in getting all for doing little useful work and that too, as a burden and not as love's labour.

A STUDENT.—Such persons deserve no employment.

TEACHER.—Hence it is that they prove big failures in life.

There was a young man who was my teacher in first standard English for a few months. He then gave up that job and joined Judicial Department as a Munshi. His rise was phenomenal. His promotions became rapid and in a few years, he was promoted to the post of the Clerk of the Court. The secret of his most rapid rise was his wonderful utility. As a Munshi, he would sit hours in the night to clear the heavy arrears left by his predecessor. The Sub-Judge's attention was drawn by this amazing feat of the Munshi. He transferred him to his own office. Within a few months he proved more useful than the Reader. Whenever he wrote judgments, he asked this young man to bring the file to him. This young man would go through the file and be ready to help the Sub-Judge. The Sub-Judge spoke to his higher officials. This young man had wonderful diligence and dispatch. He loved work as a great hobby of his life and lived for it. He made his officers completely dependent on him. He and his lazy colleagues had the same twenty-four hours of a day to work and yet while the lazy would snore and sleep away their time, this young man would work upto mid hour of the night. This is how by developing his utility to others, he ruled his officers and made a meteoric progress in life.

A STUDENT.—What were his qualifications, Sir ?

TEACHER.—He was simply a third-class matriculate and time came when he had graduates as his subordinate. He superseded even graduates who were senior in service to him. Besides possessing merit, one should increase one's utility wherever employed.

A STUDENT.—Can you give us some instances of graduates

who have risen in life like this ?

TEACHER.—One day, I met a young man who was in a college. He passed LL.B. in the first division. One day he told me, "Sir, I am bound to rise. There is always a place at the top. I aspire for that and I shall work to achieve that". Years passed and I met him again in a High Court. He was practising as a lawyer there and he was among those at the top in practice. When he saw me, he said, "Friend, I have achieved my goal. It is so easy to achieve it only if we increase our utility. I gave myself body and soul to my work and *did my clients' work so thoroughly and well and so honestly that* if I had once a client he was always my client. My clientele has increased and to-day I am one of those who are at the top."

As opposed to this case, I met a man who believed in getting rich quickly. He became dishonest and corrupt. He could extract money from clients on one pretext or another. He could be purchased by persons who wanted to file false cases and create false evidence. He was accessible to the other side. The result was that he won money quickly enough but after sometime he stood exposed. His practice dwindled and his clientele consisted only of rogues. He lost both in income and respect.

Those who do not believe that by increasing their utility to others they can win a permanent and sure success, suffer most terribly in life.

A STUDENT.—How can we increase our utility, Sir ?

TEACHER.—We can do so by doing our very best wherever placed. By honesty and unsparing diligence, we can become *indispensable* wherever employed. It is the lazy or the dishonest who do not make even an adequate return for the wages received. Our ordinary coolies and common workmen, our domestic servants, our masons, carpenters, tailors, clerks and even those occupying high jobs in life, do not as a rule make an adequate return for the wages or salaries they receive. They do not do their best. In many cases they do not deserve, in view of their work, the money paid to them. *They are dishonest*. Such persons do not win the esteem of their masters. They are never missed when dismissed or discharged. It lies in man's own power to raise one's value in the eyes of others, only if one increases one's utility for them.

A STUDENT.—Sir, the dishonesty in labour which you complain of is almost universal. One day my father remarked that while building his own house he felt that he paid thrice the money in wages because the labourers were dishonest workmen. They would evade work. They would try to loiter about. Once when he was absent, all of them sat down doing nothing. He returned after hours and they had made no progress. This indeed is most dreadful.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. This dishonesty in work is so universal that once a man becomes honest, he is atonce noticed as a special person.

My own younger brother wanted to enter some service. I sent him to a distant place. I told him to accept any job he could get, and I told him that his progress would be very rapid. He asked me the reason why I said so. I told him, "Brother, I know what character you have developed in our society. That is a rare thing. It shall bring you into prominence." He started as a clerk. Within three or four years, he became Superintendent of a branch. He told me how his European officer was impressed by his clean and honest work and how he made him to supersede graduates. "Dear brother," he said, "I wonder why clerks put in least amount of work. When we are in office, we are servants of somebody. We should do our very best to do our work. I am surprised at the laziness of clerks in general." "This is why," I said, "you have made progress. You are taught to do your very best. That is a rare thing. You did your best and your boss recognized your honest work."

Let a man do his honest best and thus increase his utility and he would be marked out for promotion and honour.

A STUDENT.—I believe absolutely, Sir, in the truth that by increasing our utility we increase immensely our chances for progress.

TEACHER.—All our political parties in India publish their election-manifestoes. In their manifestoes, they lay down the programme of work before the public. This programme is nothing but a promise by them to make their life as useful to the public as possible. They declare that they would live not by empty words but by increasing their utility. Even Governments have often to proclaim how far they have proved their



utility. No individual or organization can long prosper which ceases to be of any utility to those whose interests they have to serve.

A STUDENT.—This is true, Sir.

TEACHER.—We in Dev Samaj, have certain fixed periods of time in a year set apart for examination and purification of our life in one relation or another, i.e., in relation to parents and children, brothers and sisters, wife and husband, our nearest kith and kin, our race, our country, our society, our own self, master and servant, animal world, plant world, mineral world etc., etc. On the close of the fixed period, we hold a special meeting in that relation. One day, our Master, Bhagwan Devatma, sent for his servant who worked in his garden, put a garland around his neck, gave him a good present and expressed his high appreciation for his work. This was a signal honour done to that servant. Bhagwan was deeply impressed by his honesty of work. The servant never needed a supervisor. He did his duty most diligently and well. He increased his utility to a great extent. He made himself indispensable. And by his such honest work, he earned the appreciation of his unique Master. Is it not true that man increases his worth immensely by increasing his utility by honest, diligent and devoted work ?

A STUDENT.—He does so. When one has to work why should not one work honestly and devotedly ?

TEACHER.—The reason is plain. Man does not love his job. He does not realize that by working honestly, he raises his value in life. He thinks that by working less, he conserves his own bodily health and strength or finds joy of a lazy person. "Why should I work when I am getting so little !" is the song of this type of foolish man.

Once I quoted a story from a good book. A carpenter was engaged by a Judge to repair his fence-gate. The work required only a day to complete. When the Judge returned, he found that only one side of the gate was made. He grew angry with the man. He thought the carpenter was cheating him in order to have wages for the second day, too. The carpenter told him that he would not claim any wages beyond those fixed by him. "Why do you, then, waste your time ?" said the Judge. "I am not wasting my time, Sir," he said, "I cannot leave my work

half or shabbily done. *My work is my character.* I do not want to leave an idea of my rotten character by leaving behind rotten work." He did his best and accepted wages only for one day. Some years later, this carpenter had given a tender for a big Government contract. As chance would have it, the same Judge who had become the Governor, was to decide. He saw the carpenter, recognized him and called him. "I accept your tender," he said, without going through other tenders. This made his fortune. It is possible that such accidents may not happen in every case. But this much does happen that an honest worker wins great appreciation and his value rises.

A STUDENT.—We agree. I feel that honest work is a great virtue in a man.

TEACHER.—One great advantage which accrues to an honest worker is that he becomes efficient and reliable. He thus develops his character. You know that character is the proudest possession of man. If a man loses wealth, he loses nothing. If he loses his health, he loses something. If a man loses character, he loses everything. Hence dishonest workers or those who try to do the least and expect the highest wages or who consider work as a calamity which has to be avoided as much as possible, lose their character and they degrade themselves and become very poor specimens of humanity.

## BUILDING UP ONE'S CHARACTER

A STUDENT.—Kindly give us one more talk on how higher character raises us in the estimation of the world and proves an unfailing key to progress.

TEACHER.—One factor which considerably helps one to win through life is higher character or trustworthy life. You have asked me to deal with this new factor. I would, therefore, give a talk to-day on "Higher or trustworthy character."

A STUDENT.—We are anxious, Sir, to have a talk on this subject.

TEACHER.—It was only last night that a man narrated to me an incident of the life of a person who was an employee in the firm of some very wealthy persons. This employee was known to be very honest. Whenever the firm wanted to purchase wheat, the agriculturists would not let the rich masters weigh the commodity. "Call your employee please, if you want to weigh and have our corn," they would say. The firm, therefore, could not do without him.

Only recently a case was decided against the Police report just on the evidence of a *Nambardar*. The magistrate remarked that the witness impressed him as a trustworthy one and hence he felt on the safe-ground in deciding the case on his evidence. Such is the value which attaches to the word of an honest man. This *Nambardar* is still alive and he is a member of our society.

A Brahman employee of a big Sardar had proved himself so trustworthy and honest in his service that when several persons, moved by jealousy, complained to the Sardar against the employee, the Sardar got very much angry. He said to them, "You little realize against whom you are laying these false charges. I know my employee. He has saved me thousands of rupees. I had employees before. But I know how this gentleman has improved my estate and considerably improved my financial prospects. As a reply to your complaint, I am

going to give him a promotion from to-day". He kept his word. By telegram he gave him the promotion. This employee was also a member of our society.

You can, therefore, see how trustworthy character enhances the value and utility of man.

A STUDENT.—We see, Sir, that such a character in fact enhances man's value in life. But why is it that even then people are dishonest.

TEACHER.—People are dishonest because they are themselves blind. They have not awakened to the ugliness of dishonest life. They see no real loss in destroying honesty and becoming dishonest. On the one hand, when a man is insensitive to the value of honesty and on the other he sees definite gain in dishonesty which brings him cash money and respect in community, he cannot but become dishonest. In some cases they are even encouraged by their family members and associates in their dishonest life.

A STUDENT.—Does not dishonesty, Sir, bring its own ugly reward here on this earth ?

TEACHER.—So far the character or inner life of man is concerned, dishonesty degrades him. He cannot escape this necessary consequence of his evil life. Often times he gets the reward of his evil life even in terms of worldly values.

A STUDENT.—Kindly illustrate this.

TEACHER.—There was a Tehsildar known to me. He was very able and very diligent. But he was a notorious bribestaker. Some of his immediate officers looking to his ability and work took no serious step against him. He was also very cautious and left no trail of his crime anywhere. One day I had gone to his court to represent a client of mine. He said to me, "My mother had blessed me that I shall always have gold coins in my purse. Just look at my purse and I have some guineas now too." He never cared to think how he got them. Only six months before his retirement, he became reckless in his dishonesty. Naturally, there was a great uproar. His immediate officer became alert and caught him red-handed. The Tehsildar was immediately suspended. After necessary enquiry, he was tried and convicted. He spent thousands in order to get acquitted. In the High Court he engaged the services of one of the most well-known Barristers from another province, who

enjoyed all-India reputation. He had to pay the heaviest possible fees. But all was in vain. He had to suffer both fine and punishment. He was practically ruined.

But this was not all. His son imbibed this wrong spirit of his father. He was involved by his acts in a serious affair and disqualified to work in the profession he followed. Thus he lost both, his job and reputation.

Two very capable, highly educated and useful persons were wrecked on the shoals of low character !

Want of character, thus, robs a man of his chance to reap benefit of his ability and diligence.

TEACHER.—I know a very great man, now deceased. He was an advocate. Profession of law is rightly viewed in its present condition as not healthy for moral life of the practitioner. And yet this lawyer was literally worshipped. In the pre-partition days, when Congress was at the height of power, he stood as an independent candidate for an Assembly election and beat the Congress-candidate hollow. He was appointed as Speaker of the Assembly.

I know one incident of his life. There was a lady whom an officer had assaulted. She raised hue and cry. The man was arrested. The case proceeded against him. The great man was then an unknown lawyer. The woman engaged him as her advocate. The relations of the accused met me once, years after that event and one of them said, "This advocate is wonderfully honest. We tried to bribe him. We offered him Rs. 11,000 through a trusted man. He repulsed our overtures and grew more enthusiastic in the defence of that woman. He was then very needy. Our amount would have been a fortune for him. But this great son of a blessed mother, stood true to his noble principles. We hated him at that time. But we love and trust him now."

This most scrupulous honesty brought him at the top of the bar. There were other advocates as capable as he, but his most trustworthy character brought him head and shoulders above his contemporaries. It was this high character which made him ever in demand and sometimes he charged fabulous fees and the clients gave him that. His merit shone resplendent because of his noble character.

High character, therefore, enhances the worth of a man's

value and utility.

A STUDENT.—We wish more instances of this kind could be brought to our notice to produce greater conviction in our minds that high character pays.

TEACHER.—In business too, business honesty pays. I read the story of a Bengali multi-millionaire. It is said he was an employee of a firm. He was sent to Calcutta to make purchases and was trusted with several thousands. When he reached the market, he was attracted by a speculation. He wanted to go in for it. He made a resolve in his mind that if he lost money, he would make good to his masters. But if he won the deal, all his profits would go to his masters. He won a heavy profit. He went and paid the amount to them. This and other acts of his life developed in his masters, an almost unshakable faith in him. They made him a partner. The customers flocked to him because of his high trustworthiness. He ultimately became the master of the firm. Money poured in his coffers from all directions. He became a multi-millionaire. The writer of his sketch said that all that was due to his noble life, otherwise there were lots of others who possessed the same or even greater ability.

At Delhi, I was taken to a shop to drink milk. The gentleman who took me there, said, "This milk-seller is perfectly honest. He charges more price. He also pays higher price to those who supply him with milk so that they may give him unadulterated and pure milk." When I reached the shop, I had to wait for long before I could get my turn. This is how trustworthiness pays in business. But in our country, it is a task for our merchants or those engaged in business to stick to higher principles of life. The easy money appeals to them. Hence general mistrust prevails.

A STUDENT.—This is sad, Sir, that our people should forget that a genuine coin pays while a counterfeit coin has the shortest span of life. In the same way, genuine or high character pays. Dishonesty has a short life.

TEACHER.—If such a conviction were to grow and develop in man in general, most of the misery, born of mal-adjusted relations due to untrustworthy character, would end. Men in general are unhappy because faith in one another has vanished. Suspicion and mistrust prevail. With the growing experience

of the world, man's suspicion in his brother man increases apace. Want of character has destroyed faith and trust in mutual relations. Destruction of faith and trust has destroyed peace in humanity and led to bickerings and strife.

A STUDENT.—This is true, Sir, and yet man has feeble faith in higher character.

TEACHER.—It is up to you youths to set an example of noble and trustworthy life. If you are also swept away by the general current of low-life, there is hardly any hope for mankind. But path of higher character is not a path of roses.

A STUDENT.—Why is it so, Sir ?

TEACHER.—An honest man becomes an eye-sore. Years ago there was an outbreak of a terrible epidemic in several towns in my province. There were quarantines everywhere. In my town, nobody could go out without a pass. The clerk who had to issue passes had a great chance to take bribes. People anxious to get out were willing to pay Rs. 20 for a pass. The clerk who was then employed, was a member of our society. He refused this filthy money. He was unpopular among people who were dishonest and who wanted passes on false pretexts. He was unpopular among his colleagues who wanted a share of the booty. However, he stood firm. When the epidemic subsided and the office was closed down and normal conditions were restored, his reputation naturally increased.

Only a few days ago, another member of our society told me how he had hard time with his colleagues. People would submit false bills for mileage on tours, when in fact they had not gone out. He would not do so. They mistrusted this good man and viewed him as an unwelcome addition to their ranks. Greedy and dishonest persons consider a noble and trustworthy man as a menace.

One station master, who was perfectly honest, met me at his station and said to me, "Most of our people are not honest. Even those placed above us, want a share of the booty of the station. I keep myself aloof. I neither take share of this tainted money nor give it to others. The result is that I am unpopular among subordinates and unpopular among my officers. I feel I am lying on a bed of thorns. But I value those thorns better than roses of dishonesty."

A STUDENT.—He was a splendid man !

TEACHER.—He was indeed a valiant man. It is because of such persons that wheels of society clogged by the dishonest, run a bit smoothly. If a human being does not realize the value of higher character, should we expect animals and plants to do so? Higher character is the highest gift of man and yet he wrecks it without any compunction.

A STUDENT.—This indeed is the greatest possible tragedy which is being enacted on this earth. I feel, Sir, that those who stand for most scrupulous honesty and trustworthy life are doing the highest service to man.

TEACHER.—Indeed so.



## WORK

A STUDENT.—You have often told us, Sir, that very few people can overwork themselves. In our land, at least, it is safe to say that people seldom suffer from mental strain due to overwork. Would you please make this point clear ?

TEACHER.—“Work is worship,” is a saying which is popular in European literature. So far as we are concerned, we have yet to learn to make worship of our work. When I was an advocate, a pleader friend of mine once told me a story of a great Indian. That story he placed before me as an example of a perfect life. He said : “In.....there is a sadhu who is known never to have got up from his cot for ten years on end. He neither eats, nor drinks, nor answers the call of Nature, nor washes his body, nor changes his clothes on his own account. If somebody feeds him he has no objection, if somebody clothes him he has no objection. If somebody washes his body after a motion, he has no objection. If somebody changes his bedsheet after he urinates on his cot he has no objection, but personally he is interested in none of these things. Now, can you tell me if the West can cite a single example of such a perfect renunciation ?”

Thus you can see, dear students, that the state of complete inactivity is being idolized in our land. For persons of this way of thinking, work can never be worship.

A STUDENT.—This, Sir, is an extreme case. Would you mind illustrating from everyday life that work has not appealed to us so much as it has appealed to Western nations ?

TEACHER.—From my childhood up to now, I have heard people saying : “If we had but no hungry mouth to feed, we would never worry ourselves with the task of earning our livelihood.” This shows that they are working not because they love work, but because without work they will die of starvation. Again, the greatest blessing that is wished and prayed for by parents in the case of a daughter, is that she may marry in such a family where she may not have even to

touch the floor with her feet—meaning thereby that her needs may be satisfied on the cot without so much as moving her little finger. Off and on, I come across the so-called sadhus who come to beg for alms. I just propose to them that I would give them their wages and a full meal if they would only work. Their uniform reply has been, “If we had to work, why should we have taken to the life of a sadhu ?” Some of them even quote a verse from our scriptures which, when translated, comes to this : “Where Ram exists *kam* (work) flies away and where *kam* (work) exists there you cannot find Ram. The co-existence of both is as impossible as that of light and darkness.” We have in India nearly 75 lakhs of sadhu of all kinds. They are persons who are generally not at all engaged in any useful work. These 75 lakhs of sadhus would be a unique army in the cause of any good mission if they had but the heart and mind for work. Instead of being useful units of society, they are in an overwhelming majority of cases, nothing but drones—a dead weight on India. These persons have been fascinated by the gospel of idleness. Their influence on house-holders has been very unhealthy. Even house-holders consider work to be a curse and they sigh for the life of those good-for-nothing sadhus. In all the various departments of life, one can witness this laziness of body and the laziness of intellect prevalent everywhere. There is a tendency to do less work and get more wages. There is hardly any feeling for making an adequate return for the wages received. Ordinarily, therefore, our agriculture is suffering, our industry is suffering, our commerce is suffering, our big ventures are suffering, because the men employed therein are not inclined to make an adequate return for the wages received.

Looking at the student world, what do we find ? How many among you can honestly admit as to how much time per day do you regularly devote to your studies ? Ordinarily, students in the first and the third year classes try to, what they call, enjoy life. Their enjoyment does not consist in any healthy and deep interest in books but of killing time by lying in bed with a light book in hand or in gossips which do not seem to end. They seem to prefer idleness to work. If the students were to find interest and joy in work, they would soon realize that every subject would turn out to be the easiest one for them.

It is avoidance of work or even hatred for work which leaves behind a lot of their daily work in arrears. And when the examination approaches, they study their books in such a hurry and flurry that they are naturally not able to digest them and they cannot but hate them. The result is that four years of stay in a college leaves them more indifferent to studies than they were before joining. By avoiding work they create in themselves a distaste for studies. This makes them, in their subsequent life, fond of very light literature or newspaper reading and nothing more. This is why our graduates in the majority of cases do no creative work. Their minds are informed, no doubt, but they lose the initiative which can develop in them the interest and love for work.

A STUDENT.—Sir, don't you think that overwork would ruin our constitution and thus make us physical wrecks ?

TEACHER.—To remove this fallacy of yours, I will refer you to an article in *The Illustrated Weekly of India* for June 26, 1938, under the title : "Hard Work Spells Long Life," by Sir Barker—a surgeon who is in his 70th year. He says :—

"Reason might suggest that to live long it is necessary to conserve the body's energies. Scientific facts reveal a somewhat surprising information that we call on but one-ninth of our body's functional capacities, and therefore possess enormous reserves."

A STUDENT.—Sir, does he mean by this that we cannot exhaust our bodily reserves by work ?

TEACHER.—Sir Barker himself explains :

"Generally speaking, we never know our full physical capabilities or, in biological terms, our potential. And this is true, too, of our brains : we work them only to something like a ninth of their capacities. Enormous reserves, therefore, are always kept uncalled for."

A STUDENT.—Does it mean, Sir, that in order to live to our best and longest, we must use these reserves by functioning them to a larger extent ?

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Sir Barker says : "All things being equal, to attain to a ripe old age, it is essential that the organism should function to its capacity. Those live longest who live most intensely, or, to use again the biological term, who function to the limit of their potential. Good health means

maximum function, and that also both on the physical and the mental sides. And that is but another way of saying—work !”

A STUDENT.—Do you then mean, Sir, that we can never suffer from overwork ?

TEACHER.—“Ordinary people,” says Sir Barker, “it is safe to say, seldom suffer from mental strain due to overwork. One is used, often, to hear of ‘brain fag’ but according to modern physiology, there is no such thing. One distinguished scientist recently went on record to the effect that *it is impossible to overwork the brain*, such are its reserves”.

A STUDENT.—This is splendid, Sir, but have the scientists collected any direct evidence of this theory ?

TEACHER.—Yes, they have. Sir Barker says : “Direct evidence of such facts as the foregoing is obtainable today, thanks to the perfection of the technique of laboratory methods of research. We may take it, then, as proven that we run little danger of shortening our lives by the vigorous pursuits of physical and mental activities. Work, whether it be work for the joy of it or work for gain or work imposed by economic necessity, involves us in *function* ; and function takes us towards health and life. The more fully the organism functions, the healthier it is.”

A STUDENT.—Sir, would you mind giving us living illustrations of persons who are very active and busy and yet they are long-lived and healthy.

TEACHER.—The same journal, dated June 26, 1938, has given the photos, the ages and the records of activities of some of the veterans who have refused to give up their labours though every one of them is above seventy. Sir Phiroze Sethna is a veteran Parsi magnate of Bombay. He is now seventy-one years of age. It is said about him that he is an amazingly active man. He rises daily at six, spends his day attending to the affairs of many business concerns (including India’s biggest Indian Bank) and dines out with the youngest. He is also head of the Rotary International in India and list of his activities would be too long.

There is, again, our well-known and distinguished countryman, Sir P.C. Ray. He is now seventy-seven years of age. He is one of our eminent scientists. He held the Palit Professorship of Chemistry at Calcutta University for 21 years, retiring

at 76. This means that he accepted that Professorship at the age of 50 when persons are turned out from their offices on pensions as not good enough for work.

There is another gentleman named Sir M. Visvesvaraya. He is now seventy-seven years of age. He retired from the Bombay P.W.D. thirty years ago. He then served in Hyderabad and Mysore, becoming Diwan of Mysore from 1911 to 1918. He has since written a great deal, worked on many important committees and recently presided over an inquiry into the irrigation problems of the Presidency he first served.

There is again, a remarkable person who is now called the Grand Old man of Mysore. He is none other than Sir K. P. Puttanna Chetty. He is now aged 82. He rose from a clerk to become the senior member of the State Executive Council and though now on the retired list, continues to take an interest in public affairs and to spend money freely on charity. He recently gave Bangalore City a fine Town Hall. Oldest of these all is another distinguished Parsi, Sir Temulji. He has celebrated this year his 91st birthday. His wife, Lady Nariman, is also of the same age. They married when they were six years of age. Thus they have completed 85 years of happy married life. Even at the age of 91, Sir Temulji is still an active Bombay citizen. He has always been a hard worker and has found time to interest himself in the affairs of the Bombay University and the Municipal Corporation and to serve as a member of the Legislature for some time.

\*These are some of the great Indians who are still busy in their respective labours, though everyone of them is more than seventy years of age. Among our Viceroys, Lord Willingdon came out to India as its Viceroy at the age of 65, when most men would have been on pension. He is now 71 years of age and we can realize his enormous capacity for work from the fact that he worked for five years as the head of a big country like India. Even now he does not appear to be a spent-up force. He is as vigorous, both in body and mind, as before.

From these small sketches of the lives of these few personalities, you can find an inspiration in the belief that you never suffer physically or mentally by work, if you are normally

\*This lesson was written in 1938.

healthy. On the contrary, vigorous bodily and mental work leads to the healthier function of body and mind and, therefore, calls for the best in us.

I have personally lived at the feet of my unique Master, whose capacity for work was phenomenal and who loved work as he loved life. At the age of 78, he produced a masterpiece of philosophy of the human soul, which is a packed volume of nearly six hundred pages, and contains the gems of truth of the most profound value. To write even an article worth publication appears to a young man a task of life. What can be the wonderful capacity of him who at the ripe age of 78 could sit for hours to put in black and white and in wonderful language the wonderful achievements of his great thinking and research work ! During his life he wrote, edited and compiled more than three hundred books. And besides delivering thousands of sermons and lectures, he wrote thousands of articles of permanent value. With all this Herculean task he lived up to the age of nearly eighty. Those who have realized the value of work would hate the gospel of inactivity. They feel that a person who retires from the world and passes his entire life in the solitude of a jungle or on a mountain peak is leading a life of utter selfishness.

A STUDENT.—I have understood, Sir, the value of work. But there are several kinds of work. There is work for monetary gain. There is work which is creative as in the field of scientific research etc. There is work, again, which is purely unselfish and which is put forth entirely for the welfare of mankind. Do you think all these various kinds of work are of the same value and have the same direct result on the worker ?

TEACHER.—Honest work in every case is better than no work. A man who lives on the earnings of another and does nothing even for his own living is a contemptible creature. Every kind of honest and hard work is praise-worthy. It leads to the healthier functioning of the body and mind of a man. But work also varies according to the motives behind it. If the motives are self-seeking, their influence on the soul of a man is not elevating, but if the motives are creative and, above all, altruistic, they not only produce a lot of good in the world but enormously elevate the life of the worker, also. Hard, honest work yields the highest profit when yoked to the unselfish life.

## ALTRUISM AND WORK

TEACHER.—Today, I want to give you a talk upon another aspect of work. In the majority of cases, men are disinclined to work if they can get money for nothing. But there are people who are honest in their work. They want to give an adequate return for the amount paid to them as wages. But higher than these are those who love to do a thing not with the desire for gain but with a desire to do it for its own sake.

A STUDENT.—Sir, will you kindly give us some illustrations of these various kinds of people ?

TEACHER.—So far as the people of the first category are concerned you will meet them at every corner. If you hire a tonga for some destination and even fix the hire with the tongawala, you will find that if the distance is greater than what he *imagined*, he will begin to grumble on the way. If he finds you weak, he will compel you to increase his hire or he will ask you to get down. But in case he takes you to the destination, he will pick up a quarrel and ask you to pay more for the ride than what was agreed upon. This is in the blood of the tongawalas. They want to have more hire than you have fixed with them. If you hire a tongawala on the rate of so much per hour, he will grumble with you if you continually move about. He will feel happy if you take him a mile and then remain with your host for two or three hours giving the tongawala a long rest. In the same way, if you give your cloth to a tailor to prepare shirts for you and even if you agree to pay him the charges he asks, he will, as a rule, try to steal some cloth and thus try to get more out of you than is due to him. If you have to build a house, you will see that as soon as you are absent, all labourers, masons and carpenters grow slack in their work and turn out one-third or one-fourth of the work and cheat you of the rest. In various offices, the same sight meets us. Ten times a clerk will go out to urinate, and as many times to smoke. Besides this, if the call for the papers

is not urgent, he would sleep over the work with the result that his arrears would pile up.

I know of a Tehsildar who was very capable but he was very lazy. For weeks together he would let the work accumulate. It was only when reminder after reminder was issued to him for the disposal of the work that one fine morning he would get up, take his seat at the desk and be there for hours continuously till he had disposed of every urgent paper. This haste in itself could not, as a matter of course, enable him to give as much time to the matter as it deserved. This kind of behaviour is a general weakness of "baboo". It is said about such people that if they can manage to lie down, they would not sit. If they can manage to sit, they would not stand. If they can manage to stand, they would not walk. If they can manage to walk, they would not run. Such are the people who naturally become dishonest in their work. Not only do they not turn out sufficient work for the wages received, but they go so far as to give a base coin in place of a genuine one, or something spurious for one of a correct brand.

Once I went with a friend to a shop which was opened to popularise *swadeshi* goods. My friend was fond of *swadeshi*. He purchased something of a make which was costly. He paid two rupees for it. The shop assistant then took the cloth to pack it and gave the bundle to us. When we returned home, we found to our great surprise that the material given to us was altogether different from the one bargained for. We had paid two rupees and it was not worth even four annas. This sort of people are contemptible. They do not make any headway in life. They lose in credit no doubt, but thousand times more do they lose in character.

A STUDENT.—Such people, Sir, are indeed contemptible !

TEACHER.—Far above these people are those honest workers who try their very best to make a full return for their wages. I know of a gentleman who was for a few days my teacher. This man had passed the Matriculation examination. He entered a judicial department as a clerk on fifteen rupees. He possessed that beautiful virtue of being true to himself. He was given some work which was definitely assigned for his post. Within a month or so, he attracted the attention of the Senior Sub-Judge in whose court he worked. He found that the record was given



a definite form and shape and arranged in such a way that any paper could be had instantly. Besides that, most of the arrears—the curse of that office—had been cleared. This young man had no eye for bribes as his predecessors had. He was anxious to dispose of the work and not to keep it hanging till his palm was greased. After some time the judge transferred him to a more responsible post which was directly concerned with the disposal of the suits under him. There also this young man showed the same wonderful spirit. He would sit upto midnight and finish up the work. In the morning, the judge found every thing complete and in order. His respect for the clerk rose by leaps and bounds. There was a vacancy and he was appointed over the heads of ten other clerks. After a year or two, the judge left a beautiful opinion about him on the record. His successor in office at once found this distinction in the young man. After a few months when the reader went on leave, he appointed this young man to that post, as a temporary hand. Before the tenure of the judge was over this young man was made permanent in that post and was transferred to the office of the District Judge. Within eight or nine years, he rose from this post to a much higher one. When I returned from college after getting my M.A., and LL.B. degrees, he had risen to a higher job getting rupees hundred and twenty-five. From this post he was given a sudden lift to a job of Rs. 200 a month. Thereafter, I lost sight of him. Here was a case of a young man who did nothing but made an adequate return for the wages he received. This necessarily made him honest to his boss and true to himself. His credit rose as his character became finer. They are fools who forget this simple truth that by becoming dishonest they lose credit in life in the eyes of others. This is besides that supreme satisfaction which is the lot of honest workers only.

There was a carpenter who was engaged by my society to do a certain job when the building construction was going on. This man was not known to us. But his work very quickly brought him into prominence. While another carpenter would while away his time and make a poor return, this carpenter stuck to his work like a true and honest soul and did his utmost to give the best of himself. His out turn naturally was not only quantitatively more but even qualitatively much superior.

This single trait in him gave him so much importance in the eyes of our society that whenever we had any big construction in hand, this man was generally sent for, and even put in charge of the work. As a supervisor he used to become unpopular in the eyes of those carpenters, masons and labourers who were dishonest workers.

I have seen a doctor and a lawyer come quickly to the top by this single trait of character.

A STUDENT.—Sir, why is it that people do not realize the beauty of this trait ?

TEACHER.—The reason is plainly this, that they want to have wages for nothing. They consider work a curse. If they can have money by dishonesty, i.e., without doing any work, they would be anxious to avail themselves of the opportunity. Dishonesty appears to them a dear friend as it saves them the strain of work. These foolish people do not understand that to love work means loving life itself. It is the work that makes the functioning of our body and soul healthier as I have shown you in my previous talk. They love laziness and want to have the wealth of the whole world by laziness. They are unfortunate souls !

A STUDENT.—Sir, are there such persons who do work for the love of it without having any desire for gain ?

TEACHER.—Yes, there are. But their number is very small. It is said probably about Michael Angelo, one of the greatest artists that the world has produced, that he was deputed to paint the roof of the greatest cathedral in Rome. These paintings were to take him years. He was then a poor struggling man who needed money, and when the Pope offered to pay him his wages for the work, the artist refused to accept them. The reason that was assigned for this peculiar conduct of his was that he felt that he would never be able to do full justice to his art when the feeling of having profit out of it was upper-most in his mind. He felt that doing the work out of unselfish motive would dispel from his mind the clouds which greed gathers, and thus leave his mind free to soar in the regions of his art unshackled by any low desire. It is not known how many people realized his view-point then, and it is not known how many of you would realize it even now. He was called a fool that he should have bound himself to do that

big work for years without any profit to himself. But the world knows that these paintings are the greatest masterpieces of art in any period.

A STUDENT.—Sir, what was the secret of his attitude ?

TEACHER.—I have explained that to you just now. But I would repeat it. The secret is that every lower desire warps the mind. It cannot let the mind soar up into the regions of the highest thought. The prime motive being desire for money and not the art, it is but natural that art must suffer. The lover of a thing would not count the cost. He would live for the perfection of his art and not for himself. He would, therefore, try to give his time willingly, his attention willingly, his energy willingly and everything that he has willingly in order to make it perfect. Many a genius has lost a great opportunity of his life because he prostituted genius to some lower desires of greed or glory, or such other similar thing. The best artists are said to have degraded themselves when their art was in demand and they had to meet the demand for making financial gain. It is in very rare cases that men live for the perfection of their art and they give to the world immortal and elevating things.

A STUDENT.—Sir, every one of us cannot be an Angelo. Can you give us illustrations from ordinary life of those who have lived for the love of the work and not for gain ?

TEACHER.—Let me give you an illustration from the life of a very common man.

There is a story of an humble man which has been preserved. He followed the profession of a shoe-black. A great man while passing through a street saw this shoe-black and gave him his shoes to polish. He was surprised to see that though the wages that he had fixed were very moderate, yet the man seemed in no haste to complete the work. He polished the shoes thrice and yet seemed dissatisfied with his work. He once more polished them and when he had done them to his own satisfaction, he returned the pair to that great man. The great man naturally felt surprised. He said, "My man, why have you devoted so much time and so much energy to this small piece of work, when the wages fixed are so meagre ?" The shoe-black replied, "I cannot feel happy by doing the work in a slipshod manner. I feel miserable when it does not come

up to my ideal of what I want to do. I love my work and I do not follow it for the money I get, but for the joy it gives me. It is my hobby"

This love is on a very humble scale, but it has got the fragrance of true love. It cannot be compared to that wonderful love of Angelo but it gives the man a much higher position in the scale of character than given to mere honest workers. An honest worker gives an adequate return for the wages received. A lover of work does not emphasize the wages. He does not live for them. He lives for the beauty of his work and, therefore, he gives his best to it. Such persons not only enhance the glory of the work that they undertake but also beautify their own inner character. These are the persons who may rightly claim that they are doing their work not from a desire for gain but from a desire to perfect it. They can, therefore, never higggle-haggle for wages. They can never spoil the work because they are promised less wages. They can never botch it to suit their labour to the wages they get. It is not the desire for gain that demands satisfaction from them. It is the love for the beauty of the work that demands gratification from them. In their hands every work becomes a sacrament or a religious duty. They and their work both become holy.

It is such holy persons in literature, art, philosophy, history and science who have given us immortal works. It is to the authors of such immortal contributions that I pay today the homage of my heart and pray that more and more persons may follow in their footsteps, so that the world of thought and life may grow richer.

## NATURE OF HIGHER CHARACTER

A STUDENT.—You have often told us in your moral lessons that we should develop higher character. Would you kindly give us a talk on the nature, importance and value of higher character ?

TEACHER.—Ordinarily by character, we understand a capacity to overcome difficulties or temptations or weaknesses. By higher character I understand the moral capacity or soul-power which enables a man never to yield to any falsehood or evil and always to stand loyal, true and firm to any truth or higher principle or higher cause, however unpopular it may be. It is this capacity or soul-power in man which is his proudest possession.

A STUDENT.—How does such a capacity or soul-power manifest itself in a man ?

TEACHER.—This higher capacity manifests itself in a man who possesses some real and higher repulsion for any falsehood or evil ; who possesses some love for any truth or any noble cause. In a word, it is a higher repulsion or higher love or both which give birth to this capacity.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate it from anything in your own experience or from the experience of any other person ?

TEACHER.—I give you an illustration from my own life. Under the influences of my society and the atmosphere of college life in Bombay, I developed very strong repulsion for caste fetters and all meaningless, irrational and harmful rites and ceremonies. When the question arose about my marriage, I was ready to marry out of my caste. This raised a violent storm of opposition against me among the members of my own family and community. My mother was opposed to it. Though I felt great sympathy for my mother and other relations, yet I could not reconcile myself with the idea of compromising with the evil custom. All this opposition appeared to me to be

very unpleasant and I was afraid also that I may be harmed. But I did not consider all this cost to be too high a price for my loyalty to a conviction. I announced my betrothal. Then came the question about the date of marriage. I wanted to marry in the month and year considered in my province as most inauspicious for marriages and not a single marriage was to be celebrated that year among the Hindus of my town. This verdict of the Brahmins, that the year was inauspicious, did not appeal to me and I deliberately broke it. Then there was a custom prevalent in my town that a bridegroom should go to bride's house on a mare. I changed that too, and sent for a four-wheeler. In place of paper crown called *mukat* I put on a decent turban. In place of red coloured clothes, I put on a nice suit. All these innovations which may appear ordinary now, were considered awful in those days and the orthodox among my relations prophesied that either I will have a pre-mature end or my marriage will be barren. Both these prophesies proved to be utterly false. My repulsion for evils of caste system and wrong rituals and rites was so complete that no consideration, social disapproval or fear of future dreadful consequences, ever alarmed me. It was this higher repulsion that gave me the capacity to stand true to my principles and the cause of reform.

A STUDENT.—What is the value of higher repulsions ?

TEACHER.—The value of higher repulsions is as great and as glorious as the havoc wrought by lower repulsions is demeaning and harmful. If men with higher repulsions had never been born, humanity would have been crushed out of existence under the weight of evil and falsehood.

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly illustrate this ?

TEACHER.—Let me give you here an example of a living hero, Prof. Karve of Poona. This great man is now eighty-two years of age. He has given to India wonderful gifts, one of them being Women's University. If you read his life you will be surprised to see, how a higher repulsion and a higher love made him a benefactor of humanity. The sight of widows in trouble smote his heart, and a mighty wave surged through his heart to remove the injustice of enforced widowhood. When his first wife died, he took a revolutionary and the most unpopular step of marrying a widow. Even now widow-

marriage is not so popular. But in those days, nearly half a century ago, it was an anathema. But caring neither for persecutions, nor for social boycott, this good man took the step. It was then that the idea of starting an institution for widows took its form and shape in his mind. Here the widows were given sound education. Those who liked to live unmarried life were enabled to stand on their own legs with the education that they had received there, and those who liked to marry were encouraged in their innocent resolve. This is how his institution became a nucleus for the growth of that mighty reform movement which swept over Maharashtra. This can show you that one man's higher repulsion for a wrong or evil proved the cause of the removal of a great injustice. Remove Prof. Karve and you remove a mighty support of widow-marriage reform, widow-emancipation and widows' education. A true reformer is one who possesses a feeling of mighty repulsion for an evil or falsehood. In a way he becomes a saviour.

**A STUDENT.**—Higher repulsion then, Sir, is a very wonderful feeling.

**TEACHER.**—Indeed. Professor Karve developed out of that institution a bigger idea, i.e. an idea of a University for all women. In the political world you find that they who have been inspired by a strong repulsion for subjection and a higher love for freedom have proved mighty factors for political emancipation. The posthumous letter of Lala Lajpat Rai revealed a great fact. He said in that letter that he was by nature not a brave man, but the sight of the suffering millions in his country was so intolerable for him that he could not count the cost in fighting for them. His key of courage was the unbearable sight of his suffering countrymen. He felt that they were so badly prostrated because they were in subjection. His soul, therefore, rose in revolt against subjection. The historical words which Mahatma Gandhi spoke at the time he started the civil disobedience movement and started on his Dandi march, also illustrated the existence in him of the feeling of strong repulsion for subjection. He had expressed at that time that the sight of his nation lying paralysed due to subjection was intolerable to him. One meets the same higher repulsion in Pt. Jawaharlal's utterances. In the moral world too, our moral emancipators have always been those who

possessed strong feeling of repulsion against some moral evil. The crusade started against corruption by a powerful and high dignitary of judicial department of a province owes its origin to the feeling of strong repulsion which he expressed against corruption in the judicial department. This crusade came as a bolt from the blue to all those who were wedded to corruption. In the nature of things they could not appreciate the crusade ; but anyone who possesses a feeling strong enough against any moral evil, would not be dismayed if he finds no co-operators, no friends, no inspirers and also no encouragement from any quarter. This strong feeling has to find an outlet or expression, and if it finds no such outlet it will make his life miserable.

In the Congress circles the strong discipline was popularized by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who possesses mightily repulsion for a life of indiscipline. He is called by several Englishman as an Indian with an Englishman's heart and culture. The steel-frame of the British administration is due to the mighty feeling of repulsion against indiscipline which is found in the hearts of some of the greatest Englishmen. In the same way strong repulsion for unpunctuality which our Master possessed has made our society the most punctuality-loving society in India. The Founder of the Dev Samaj possessed such a complete hatred for untruth and evil that even in the lowest grades he could not admit any man as member who did not give up atleast the eight sins which I have mentioned in one of my talks before. Besides this, in our society you will find death of child-marriage, enforced widowhood, extravagant expenses on marriage and death occasions, undue purdah, subjection of women and inequality in their treatment, etc. This is all due to the fountain head from where flows the power to the Dev Samaj.

A STUDENT.—Sir, will you please give us an illustration of the value of higher love ?

TEACHER.—I have dealt with higher love in my talks on selflessness or altruism. All the best institutions in the world that you find, owe their origin mostly to the inspiration and urge of this higher love in some soul. The greatest hospitals which have made death almost impossible owe their birth, growth and development to this higher love. The present anti-tuberculosis movement, that you find started in India, owes



its origin to this higher love. There are generous donors who have left thousands of pounds for the researches to be made in the domain of influenza. Lala Lajpat Rai also started a sanatorium for the good of the T.B. patients. Those who cannot bear ignorance in the world and possess a feeling of higher sympathy for the ignorant masses, sacrifice their utmost to open schools and colleges for them. The Furguson College movement in Poona and the Deccan Educational Society owe their origin to this higher sympathy which animated the hearts of the founders. It was a similar feeling of sympathy for the suffering Indians, which made Mr. Gokhale to start the Servants of India Society—an institution which is giving to India devoted servants in social and political fields. It was higher love of scientific truths that led Prof. Bose to devote his entire life to the research of scientific truths and it was the same love which made him to found an institution for the development of the same love among students. Dr. Tagore, again, has founded Santiniketan not because an appeal was made to him to start it, but because his love for education on his own lines made him sacrifice his time, money, energies and other great powers in the service of the young and the old of India and abroad. It was the love for ancient culture and a deep desire to spread it on the lines of ancient time that led Swami Shirdha Nand to found a Gurukul system of education and culture.

It was the supreme love for truth and goodness which led our Master to make researches in the domain of the human soul and leave behind the wonderful fruit of his life-long investigations in the form of *Deva Shastra*. It was the same supreme love for truth and goodness which inspired him to found the Dev Samaj—a movement whose chief object is to spread far and wide the light and unique influences of its Master—in order to establish the kingdom of truth and goodness on earth. It is this supreme love of truth and goodness in the Master which has developed an atmosphere in the Dev Samaj in which one feels ashamed of selfishness and dissatisfied if he has done nothing for the welfare of others. To the extent that we develop this higher love, shall we be reservoirs for the flow of goodwill and good deeds in relation to others. As higher repulsion for any wrong and untruth

destroys that wrong and untruth, so any higher love in any department of human or sub-human kingdom heralds a golden age in that field.

Just see how compassion for animals has led Europeans to spend multi-million pounds not only for the good breeding of the animals but even for creating public opinion against their slaughter. As this love triumphs, so shall we find the end of animal slaughter under any form or guise. Those who possess true love for the cause of women's emancipation, would spend not only their money but even their other powers for destroying inequality between men and women. And if this love triumphs, we shall no longer have woman complaining about the injustice of man towards her. Those who love child-welfare cause would spend multi-millions of pounds in founding homes, developing maternity homes, training health visitors and midwives and spread a net-work of centres for the nursing and good bringing up of all children without any distinction. And if this love triumphs, there will be an end of the present day sad and woeful plight of millions of human children.

Those who love the welfare of the poor and the down-trodden, would make any amount of sacrifice and spend any amount of energy to remove all such forces as are prevalent in the world to crush the poor. If this love triumphs there will be an end of the poverty and suffering among the poor. Those who love to liberate man from all his evil tendencies called low-loves and low-hates and develop various altruistic feelings in him, will spend any amount of energy in this unique cause. If this wonderful love triumphs, there will be an end of the kingdom of untruth and wrong and there will be laid the foundation of the kingdom of truth and goodness. This is why we believe that higher love would herald a golden age in the world. So, dear boys and girls, you should realize that if you are to become a power in the land for the good of others, the highest lesson that you have to learn is the need and importance of the development of higher repulsions and higher loves. Those who live in an atmosphere which can help in the evolution of these noble feelings in them are blessed, and I wish that more and more men may learn to appreciate this blessed atmosphere.

## HIGHER CHARACTER AND PATRIOTISM

A STUDENT.—Sir, will you please shed some light on patriotism from the moral point of view ?

TEACHER.—According to the standard of altruism the best man is the greatest patriot. Higher souls consider that patriotism does not consist in merely solving political, economic or international problems. According to them, the highest contribution that a man can make to his country is the contribution of a noble example of life.

A STUDENT.—By patriotism, Sir, we mean love of one's country. This does not necessarily connote nobility of life. A man's private character may be even undesirable, but if he is a great leader who can lead us safely in great wars and great national crises, he is really a great patriot. Marlborough was a great General but his character, so far as honesty is concerned, was not exemplary. He was even charged with corruption. This dishonesty did not in any way detract from his glory as a general. Suppose a man is honest but incapable of leading the forces against the enemies, of what use could his honesty be to us ?

TEACHER.—You do not seem to understand even the verdict of history. History has not fallen in love with Marlborough's corruption. It has even lamented this fact. It is, however, grateful to him for the service he did to his nation. In patriotism there are two definite parts. One is the service of the country in some field and the other is the character of the man who serves. The country is grateful to the person who serves it. But it cannot shut its eyes against his moral defects. In certain cases a nation has chosen to sacrifice its national interest if the hero, who is guiding it, betrays some great moral defect. Parnell was one of the greatest leaders that Ireland has ever produced. He was about to lead Ireland to national freedom when it became known that he had clandestine and illegitimate relation with the wife of his friend

and follower Captain Ooshi. As soon as Captain Ooshi lodged the papers in a court, all the influence of Parnell was gone. This threw Ireland more than half a century back. But Ireland preferred to wear the chains of slavery to winning freedom through a man who had abused the hospitality and trust of a friend who had given him shelter. These are some of the greatest lessons which even politics gives us.

Even in India there was a European Barrister who used to feel for India, and had adopted India as his mother country. He was considered an Indian patriot. He was guilty of illicit intimacy with the wife of a man who used to be his generous host whenever he went to that town. Ultimately, he eloped with that woman. Next time, when the Congress session was held, this great patriot rose to speak. But the public would not hear him. They raised deafening voices of protest against him. He had to get down from the platform and resume his seat. Never thereafter could he come to the platform.

From these instances you can see that a scandal in character is not forgiven even in a great patriot. The private life of a patriot is not a thing of indifference to the world. Humanity demands from a patriot a certain amount of clean character. If the man is immoral but no scandal is raised against him he goes scot free because there is none to expose him. But once he is exposed, he ceases to command respect.

**A STUDENT.**—But why should it be so, Sir? When we go to a shopkeeper we don't ask his character. When we take our case before a magistrate, we have no concern with his private life. We expect from the shopkeeper the commodity for the value received. We go to a magistrate to get our grievances redressed. If they do so, it is of no consequence to us whether their private life is good or bad, desirable or undesirable, etc.

**TEACHER.**—The world is not what you represent it to be. Every one is concerned with the private life of every other person with whom he deals. If the shopkeeper is known to be sexually immoral, no man would let his wife deal with him, nor would he let the shopkeeper come to his house. In the same way, no person would remain unaffected

by or uninterested in the private life of a magistrate especially when they have to deal with him in and outside the court. The public conscience, in its last resort, is quite a sound one. It is favourably or unfavourably affected by the private life of a person. This concern becomes pronounced in the case of a person who is the idol of the people, i.e. a patriot. As a public man, his life belongs to the world. It is open to the severest criticism. And, if there is any serious laxity in the private life of such a man, the public does not show any mercy. They may utilize his powers in the solution of certain problems but as a man he is ignored. What the public demands, unconsciously though it may be, is a certain amount of high character in a public leader. In the Congress itself, you will all see that the man who commands the highest respect is the one who leads a very clean private life, i.e., Shri Gandhiji. How is it possible for a human soul to ignore the moral values? Whether conscious or unconscious of the nature and importance of a moral life, humanity cannot but instinctively feel that moral life elevates not only the life of individuals, but also very greatly that of a patriot. A moral patriot is highly esteemed.

A STUDENT.—Suppose, Sir, there is a man whose private life is bad. But his knowledge of national problems is vast. Have we to reject the offer of his services because his private life is objectionable?

TEACHER.—When I have to get my luggage carried from one platform to another, I engage the services of a coolie without asking about his private life. When I have to hire a tonga to take me home I look at the tonga but not at the private life of the tonga driver. In the same way, if I have to engage a mason to build a house, I try to find out his ability to construct a house and not his private life. In these and many other matters, I am concerned more with the nature of the ability of the man I engage than with his private life, though, man to man, I would prefer one with a better private life. But the case is quite different when we talk of a patriot. We are not merely concerned with the patriot's ability to solve a national tangle, but we are very much concerned with his private life also. The reason is that the patriot becomes an exemplar or an ideal for imitation. If the patriot's private life

is questionable, we place an undesirable person as an ideal. This not only corrupts those who are living then, but is also liable to corrupt the morals of the generations. A patriot is not an individual. He is an institution. His activities do not end with him. They have a far-reaching effect on that and the subsequent generations. Not to concern oneself with the private life of a patriot is to put premium on his moral defects and make them popular. That is why somebody has said that the best man is the highest patriot.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly tell us how a patriot is not an individual but an institution ?

TEACHER.—Take any text book of history or take any paper dealing with national topics and you will find that the best efforts are made to record and preserve the activities of the chief actors who are none but political persons and who are, therefore, called patriots. When the record of their activities is preserved, it becomes an object lesson for the generations that follow. In the history books commonly prescribed for schools and colleges, men like Mahatma Buddha occupy the smallest space but men like Napoleon cover pages after pages. There can be no comparison between Napoleon and Mahatma Buddha. And yet because Napoleon dealt with politics, his importance in history has risen. But Mahatma Buddha, who dealt exclusively with moral problems, finds very little room in political history. In the same way, Rama and Krishna are assigned not much space in political histories. Our histories are nothing but biographies of political heroes and their activities and thus from mere individuals they are raised into institutions.

A STUDENT.—But why should their private life affect us when we know they were political men and not moral leaders ?

TEACHER.—Their private life influences our conduct because we are filled with admiration for them. It is a common law that we become what we admire. Our heroes are the moulders of our life. Through reverence, we imitate their actions. That is why diplomacy which is another name for duplicity and lying has become one of the greatest arts in political life. Many a young man imitates great diplomats because they know that these diplomats serve their nation with the weapon of

falsehood. A Governor of a province publicly rewarded a man who had saved the life of an European lady from the fury of a mob by a bold and blatant lie. He was given Rs. 500. This reward was given to him in an open Durbar. Thus falsehood was considered a virtue. Those who consider these political men, whether in or outside the Government, as their heroes would imitate a life of falsehood and thus grow corrupt. Once a man becomes discriminative and judges a patriot by his private life, he will get disgusted with it and, therefore, he will consider politics a dirty game.

A STUDENT.—Is politics considered a dirty game because of the dirty life of some patriots ?

TEACHER.—The contempt in which politics is held would be evident from what has now become a common saying that politics is the last refuge of a scoundrel. This contempt has found its way there because in politics private life is divorced from public life. But because private life is divorced from public life, it has not ceased to carry the odium. The public wants that at least those who claim to serve the country should serve it by a moral life and intellectual ability. The ability to solve economic problems is not a sign of patriotism. The ability to solve of administrative problems is not in itself a virtue. Even leading armies in war is not in itself a great virtue. All these lose their value if those responsible for them have been guilty of any serious moral lapse. With all the attempts to glorify Clive, the one dark spot on his character, by which he cheated Umachand, cannot be washed away. Humanity demands a high character in its heroes. When it is not able to have heroes with a high character it chooses the next alternative of accepting the services of persons having an undesirable private life. But by accepting the other alternative, humanity is not feeling happy.

A STUDENT.—Why is it so, Sir, that humanity is not satisfied with such heroes who lack in good life ?

TEACHER.—The heart of humanity longs for better lives. The highest stratum in the land feels that if men are accustomed to have recourse to evil means in national matters, they will adopt these means in everyday life also. And there is no greater cause of domestic discord or communal bitterness and national disharmony than an evil life. The root cause of

all human misery is an evil life. In fact, an evil life is the worst enemy of man. This evil life cannot be excused because it is found in a patriot. Hence it is that some thinkers have emphasised that the best man is the greatest patriot.

A STUDENT.—How can we call the best man the greatest patriot ?

TEACHER.—We call the best man the greatest patriot because in his own life he has killed the monster of evil. In his own life he has shown the triumph of goodness. In his own life, therefore, he has provided a solution of the death of an evil life and the birth of a good life. What is, therefore, deemed a very difficult matter is proved by him as easy of achievement. This is the example which he sets before mankind. This is the example which inspires millions to walk that way. Besides this, he radiates the vitality of a higher moral and spiritual life, which really carries for millions a message of a new hope and strength. He is in fact the greatest conqueror as he has conquered his lower "self."

A STUDENT.—Is it necessary, Sir, then, for everyone of us who wants to serve his country to have a clean and beautiful private life ?

TEACHER.—It is not only necessary but it is indispensable. What, if you fight with an enemy and win, if in your everyday life with your own people you spoil the honours of others, rob others, live on the spoils taken from your own people, crush your own countrymen who differ from you in their views by intrigues and machinations. For every battle that you win against enemies, you trample upon the honour, the rights, the lives and the feelings of thousands of your own countrymen. A wicked warrior or general does more mischief than the good that he achieves. In fact, a time is bound to come when moral values will be given supreme importance and a definite minimum honourable private life will be considered as an indispensable condition for a person in whose hands the reins of a country are entrusted. A time is bound to come when the highest jobs of trust will be given in the charge of the most righteous men. And this is what should ultimately be. How can a person be called a patriot whose private life is a menace to the honour and rights of his countrymen ? I am, therefore, not very much enamoured of many of the present-day politi-



cians who show their skill in playing chess in the affairs of administration with foreigners and display extraordinary zeal in crushing the forces of opposition or in making exhibition of what they have achieved in the interests of peasants or labourers or the poor. These things may be good in their own way and they are good, but human ills are not due to poverty. They are due to the evil in the heart of man. Unless evil in his heart is erased and political leaders display this change of heart in a marked degree in their own private lives, there will be no end to our troubles. I am, therefore, convinced that purification of private life should be the concern and the serious concern of every right-thinking man who has the good of his mother country at heart and who is anxious to serve his motherland. When this becomes an actuality, the real culture of a nation will begin. Culture which has no root in the moral life of man loses half its interest and almost the whole of its importance. I, therefore, repeat that the best man is the highest patriot in the world and men possessing undesirable private lives do not deserve to be called patriots.

## HIGHER CHARACTER AND TEMPTATION

A STUDENT.—Sir, we have often heard you talking of temptation and advising us to be forewarned against it. What is the psychology of temptation ?

TEACHER.—Temptation is an appeal to such of our weaknesses as lead us to betray a higher ideal of conduct.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate it ?

TEACHER.—Yes, I give you a very significant illustration of a man who was known to be one of the best judges in America. It is said that at the height of his fame he suddenly put in his resignation which was accepted with great regret. This giant judge had never allowed anything to seduce him from the high tradition of justice. But as most of us have our weaknesses he had his own. He had an only child, a daughter, whom he loved devotedly. This only child of his eloped with a young man. This accident shocked him beyond words. One day a young man was placed before him to stand his trial for murder. The young man said that he had a very just and reasonable cause for provocation from the deceased. The deceased had insulted a respectable woman in his presence. He could not bear an honourable woman being thus insulted. This led to a scuffle which ended in the death of the deceased. The judge enquired from him the name of the girl or the woman so insulted so that he might call her in evidence. The accused refused to disclose her name. When the trial was over, the jury pronounced that he was not guilty but the judge felt convinced that he was guilty. He, therefore, wanted to disagree with the jury and pronounce the extreme penalty of law. This judgement was to be delivered the next day. He was busy writing the judgment when his servant brought a message that a lady wanted to see him and said that she refused to give her name. Before the judge could say anything the lady entered his room. This lady was none other than his missing daughter. He was overjoyed to see her and poured his paternal affection on her.

After mutual exchange of love and greetings, the girl came directly to the point. She said, "Father, the accused before you, whom you are determined to send to the gallows, is my wedded husband. He killed the deceased because the latter had insulted me. He refused to disclose my name to you because he knew that I was your daughter. Either you acquit him or tomorrow I will put an end to my life with a bullet." Here was a moment of temptation and trial for the judge. On the one hand, his sense of justice and his regard for his traditions of law made a demand on him to convict the accused, but on the other hand, his love for his only child could not bear the thought of her committing suicide. Because of his respect for justice and law and his love for his daughter, the struggle went on between these two forces till at last his love for his girl, or his weakness for her, triumphed. Next day, agreeing with the jury, he acquitted the accused. But he realized that after displaying such weakness, he was not fit to sit on the bench. He therefore resigned.

From this illustration you can realize what is meant by temptation.

A STUDENT.—Sir, this is a very remarkable case of a remarkable man. Many will have sympathy with him even in his fall. But are human beings tempted to a fall only in such extreme cases ?

TEACHER.—I gave you the above extreme case to show you the extent to which a temptation can go. Ordinarily, people are tempted to a fall very easily. Walpole, one of the greatest statesmen of England, used to say boldly : "Every man has his price." He meant thereby, that no person was above temptation. Persons differ only in degrees. For centuries this easy tendency to fall has been attacked by moralists who want to reform the government and the society. Several moral restraints have been laid down to enable a man to stand by a higher ideal of conduct. Much water has run under the bridges since the time of Walpole. A sort of public opinion has grown in England which abhors corruption in the government machinery. A certain amount of sense of honour has been engendered in many a man which helps him to stand by the canons of honesty and righteousness. As public opinion gets stronger, it makes the position of an individual also

stronger. It is this strong public opinion which enables even a weak man to be true to a higher ideal of conduct. But where public opinion is weak, there the tendency to fall is the greatest. In India, there is hardly any public opinion against bribes-taking. It is therefore, that bribe-takers rarely feel ashamed. They seldom have any sense of honour, because honour with them is not bracketed with honesty or fair dealing. In these circumstances the best way is to avoid service in such of the departments where bribe-taking is common. These departments give one an easy chance of having dishonest earnings, though it is true that a dishonest man creates opportunities everywhere for soiling his hands.

A STUDENT.—Sir, will you give us further illustrations of the horror of temptation or fall?

TEACHER.—Yes. There was a young man who was anxious to carry favour with a high district officer in order to get a good government job. This was his great weakness. One day, he found in his sister's house a photo of her husband with some of the well-known political revolutionaries in India. It was here that his weakness began to tempt him. It whispered to his mind that if he could show that photo to the district officer, he would give in his hands most conclusive evidence against his sister's husband. This evidence was actually wanted by the authorities. Now, a struggle began in his mind. On the one hand, he felt that extreme steps may be taken against his brother-in-law which might ruin his sister's home. But, on the other hand, his own weakness was repeatedly flashing on his mind the golden vision of his early rise in the government service if he could but place the photo in the hands of the district officer. The power of his temptation triumphed. He stole that photo from his sister's house and put it in the hands of the district officer. You can see here how a weakness betrays a man into doing something which is so despicable.

There is a very tragic case of one of the most remarkable men in India. This great man was known to be a saint. His relation with women was almost universally believed to be one of absolute purity. He used to feel for women very much. He had also started several institutions for their welfare. Though he was a married man and had a wife, he had practically given up sex relations with her when he was still young. At the age

of fifty-five he retired. Then he took charge of several homes for women which he had started. Incharge of one these homes was a highly cultured girl who was herself the daughter of a high judicial officer. She was above twenty-five years of age. One day, the public was taken aback by the news that swept over the country that the great man and the young woman had suddenly left, gone and married. This gave a very great set-back to the cause of women's emancipation. Up to this day this fall is a mystery to many. But the psychology of this fall could only be that he had lurking in his mind a weakness for a handsome highly educated modern girl with some high ideals. It seems her personality made the strongest appeal to his weakness and he collapsed. There were hundreds of people who wept at his fall.

There was another tragic case, though not so shocking as the preceding one, which took place in the life of a High Court Judge. This Judge was one of the great patriots of India. He stood for the cause of widow re-marriage. He led a movement and organized it into a great force for the good of the widows. But when his own wife died and he was asked to marry a widow, he couldn't do so. He married a virgin. This set ablaze the forces of opposition. The reform movement suffered immensely. The unorthodox section called him pseudo reformer, whose precepts did not accord with his practice. The psychology of his betrayal of the reform movement was his slavery to public opinion. This was his weak point and when an appeal was made to it, he fell.

Still more pathetic is the case of a religious reformer who had worked ceaselessly to get a law passed according to which no girl was to marry before the age of fourteen and no boy to do so before the age of sixteen. And yet he was the first to break this law. An offer of marriage for his daughter came from a princely quarter. The prince was to be sent to England. The government advised that before proceeding to England, he should be married. He was then below sixteen and this religious man's daughter was below fourteen. He believed that as the ceremony was to be simply formal and no consummation was to take place, there was no real danger if they were married. He thought that he did not break the law in spirit. This line of argument did not appeal to his countrymen. His

society broke into two, and it may be said without any fear of contradiction that it never recovered from the blow.

From all these instances you can gather that we betray our dear ones or even a dear cause because of a weakness in us. I have dealt with cases of a higher kind. I do not concern myself with the cases of those millions of people who are driven before temptation as dry leaves of a tree are swept before a gust of wind.

A STUDENT.—What is, then, required of those who want to stand by a higher ideal of conduct ?

TEACHER.—All that is required, in the first place, is that unique light which might reveal to us our weak points. That Rishi, I have talked of, who married the in-charge of one of his institutions for women during all the years of his life till his fall, was not aware of this weak spot in him. Had he been aware of this weak spot of his, he might have repaired the breach in his soul through which the enemy entered. In the same way, if that Indian Judge had seen earlier his slavery to public opinion and seen it to be ugly, he would have laboured hard to get rid of it. The possibilities of his fall would have been less in that case. Some of the greatest men get tempted and fall because they are caught unawares. A hidden weakness in their conduct or what is called armoury of soul, exposes them to a sudden attack of the enemy. The result is that with one shock they let fall from their hands the achievements of their struggles of years. That is why I have been impressing on you the need of self-knowledge. A person who knows his weak points and is ever watchful to remedy them is a person who is very strongly fortified. They say, forewarned is forearmed. Those, therefore, who neglect this greatest lesson of life, i.e., need of self-knowledge, can never know and can never realize when they are going to get tempted and when they are going to fall—a fall which buries in its debris the accumulated glorious fruits of their long lives. Judas has gone down in history as the greatest traitor, though he was one of the first disciples of Jesus Christ and was not at heart a wicked man.

A STUDENT.—Sir, is it enough that we get light alone which can reveal to us our weak points in their ugly form ?

TEACHER.—No, though the light which dispels darkness and reveals to us our weak points in their ugly form is a unique

blessing, yet it is not in itself a complete cure. Along with this unique light we require that unique power which might strengthen the fortifications of our heart not only to resist temptation but to smash it, so that in course of time we may become invulnerable. This unique light and this unique power are the two very essential things to raise a man above temptation and above fall.

This lesson is intended for those who really want to stand by higher ideals of conduct. All my talks are intended for those who are desirous of moral growth and moral development. Those multimillions of people, therefore, who consider higher ideals of conduct to be a nuisance and an obstruction in the gratification of their weaknesses can never profit by these talks. These talks are useful only for those who value loyalty to higher ideals as a definite and distinct glory of a human soul and who consider the absence of this loyalty in any soul as a great calamity and a great curse.

A STUDENT.—Sir, are there some persons who consider higher ideals of conduct as a nuisance ?

TEACHER.—Yes, there are. A bribes-taking father beats his son if he does not take bribes. A dishonest shopkeeper considers his own son a dead loss to his family if the son does not stoop to dishonest means. A person who wants to rise in service wants all his sons to please those in power. He will feel more happy even if they become unscrupulous in order to please the officers. In fact there are millions of parents who want their children to become dishonest, corrupt, unscrupulous, cheats, flatterers, disloyal to their country and community and to become anything, provided it brings them money and jobs. Their ideals are wealth and worldly power, and as higher character demands in many cases the sacrifice of both of them, they have poor regard for higher character itself. Our present talk does not at all apply to them. They have no temptation. Corrupt life is their normal life. Unscrupulousness is the breath of their nostrils. From this it will be evident to you that there are persons and their number is legion, who consider higher ideals of conduct as something repugnant to their souls, and positively harmful to the achievement of their base and sordid ideals.

The question of temptation rises in the case of those who

are otherwise ready and willing to stand by higher ideals or who have led lives which are in conformity with higher ideals of conduct. It is to them that I make an appeal that they must get that subline light and that sublime power which might give them spiritual self-knowledge, and spiritual strength to heal up their weak spots and fortify them against a moral fall.



## THE IDEAL OF HUMAN LIFE

A STUDENT.—Sir, what should be the ideal of human life ?

TEACHER.—It does not lie in the hands of anybody to determine the true ideal of human life. The true ideal of human life is determined for man by the immutable laws of Nature which rule the body and soul of man.

A STUDENT.—Does it lie in the hands of Nature to determine our ideal of life ?

TEACHER.—Yes, it does. All existences in Nature including man, must obey the laws of life and death which are all universal. Man, both body and soul, is as much subject to universal laws of Nature as any of the tiniest living beings or any inanimate object, big or small. These laws are uniform. They are the same for the rich and the poor, for the prince and the peasant, for the sage and the sinner. In order to know the true ideal of human life, we must find it out in the light of these laws.

A STUDENT.—What, then, is the true ideal of man according to Nature's eternal laws ?

TEACHER.—In order to understand this, we ought to remember that man is not a body. He is primarily a soul. Of his body and soul, his soul is more essential. In the soul, the constructive power is the most important. It is this constructive power which, according to its capacity, enables the soul not only to build a body in the womb of the mother and build another body—a refined one—after its physical death, but also to prolong the life of the individual soul's itself. All such powers in the soul of man which help to develop this constructive power ought to form the chief object of acquisition by man. This constructive power increases or decreases according to the higher or lower courses of conduct in man. The true ideal of human soul or *Manush Atma*, therefore, consists of two essential factors, i.e., true soul-knowledge and soul-evolution.

A STUDENT.—What is meant by true soul-knowledge ?

TEACHER.—By true soul-knowledge, we mean that knowledge which reveals to us facts about the nature and organism of the human soul and the laws of its evolution and devolution, the true means or laws of getting freedom from devolutionary forces and the true means or laws of development of evolutionary forces, etc.

A STUDENT.—How is that knowledge possible for man ?

TEACHER.—Every kind of knowledge needs a special kind of light and a special receiving organ. Knowledge of the physical things is possible in the light of the sun. The knowledge of the truths and laws working in Nature and in the body of man, is possible in the illumination provided by intellectual light. Beauty of an altruistic force and the ugliness of its opposite are possible of revelation to man in the light of some altruistic force. The knowledge of the nature and organism of the human soul, its courses and its destiny is possible only in the illumination provided by that suplime light called *Deva Jyoti*. It is this *Jyoti* or light which alone can reveal to man that most subtle thing called soul. In the absence of this light, man is bound to be plunged in soul-darkness.

A STUDENT.—Who can give this unique light ?

TEACHER.—The *Devatma* alone can generate this light in his soul and communicate it to others.

A STUDENT.—Who is *Devatma* ?

TEACHER.—In the course of the evolution of man, he is that unique manifestation who has appeared on this earth endowed with the heredity of the highest soul-forces. The germs of the highest soul-forces evolved in suitable conditions and by necessary surrenders and sacrifices fructified into the most beautiful and perfect form of all-sided and complete love for truth, all-sided and complete love for goodness, all-sided and complete hatred for all that is untrue, false or opposed to truth, and complete and all-sided hatred for all that is evil or opposed to goodness. It is these highest soul-forces in their evolved condition which generate *Deva Jyoti* much in the same way as altruistic forces generate altruistic light, intellectual forces generate mental light and physical forces generate physical light.

A STUDENT.—Is it not possible for any other person devoid

of these highest psychic forces to develop this *Deva Jyoti* ?

TEACHER.—No, that is not possible. In Nature everything comes into being under suitable conditions. Wherever the conditions are absent the thing cannot make its appearance. Every effect is due to a cause. Trees have no brain. They, therefore, possess no intellectual life. Animals have rudimentary brains ; therefore, the light that they produce or get is rudimentary. Man possesses a progressive intellect. It is, therefore, that those at the top of humanity in the scale of evolution are able to discover those laws, which it is not possible for animals and millions of men devoid of that light even to understand. Similarly, those who are devoid of an altruistic life are not able to generate that light which we often observe in a truly altruistic soul. In the same way, the highest psychic light can generate only as the result of highest psychic forces of love of truth and goodness and hatred of untruth and evil which have appeared in *Devatma*. Human soul is devoid of this equipment and hence human soul is devoid of that light. It is, therefore, essential for the human soul (devoid of that light) to get that light and he will be surprised how his subtle soul stands revealed to him in its true nature and perspective.

A STUDENT.—What is meant by the evolution of soul ?

TEACHER.—By the evolution of soul we mean, on the one hand, freedom from various kinds of low-loves and low-hates and, on the other, the development of various higher or altruistic forces.

A STUDENT.—What is meant by low-loves and low-hates ?

TEACHER.—Man is a part of the universe. Whatever desires, forces or urges impel a man to think thoughts and do deeds unduly harmful to the interest of life, powers, functions and forms of the objects of the various kingdoms of Nature, are all lower forces. When by repetition they develop into various forms of mighty forces and consequently man loses all control over them and he becomes their bond-slave, they are called low-loves. These low-loves, when obstructed in their gratification, lead to the growth of the corresponding low-hates.

A STUDENT.—Why does a man think thoughts and do deeds prejudicial to the forms and functions of other objects ?

TEACHER.—The supremely powerful motive of conduct in a human soul is his desire for happiness and aversion to pain.

This principle begins to work on him from his very cradle and is with him up to his grave and even thereafter. Whenever a person finds something affording him happiness, he likes to repeat it. When this repetition is long continued, it becomes a habit. This habit in its course develops into a love. A child likes sweet things. The pleasure of sweet things makes him repeat the taking of sweet things till at last he becomes so weak in the grip of his desire that he cannot resist the temptation of taking sweet things even when they are harmful.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate it ?

TEACHER.—Everday you come across any number of instances. I gave you a few instances out of those which have come within my knowledge. A middle-aged man had a severe attack of typhoid. He was poor and his neighbours felt pity for him and they sent for a doctor. The doctor, too, was sympathetic. By the co-operation of the doctor and the neighbours, he was cured, but the doctor left instructions that he should take only milk for the next fortnight and that if he took anything solid, he would die. This was repeatedly dinned into his ears. His wife was also warned. One day some neighbour sent some *halwa* to his wife. She kept it on a high place beyond the reach of her husband. She went out on some business. Her middle-aged husband, who should have known better, had a fit of love for sweet things. He was very weak, yet he got up to reach the place where the *halwa* was kept and took it. The result was tragic. He had a relapse. The doctor was sent for, and he had to pronounce the dreadful verdict that the man's case was hopeless and he died. Is not this a terrible slavery ?

There was another case of a young man who was employed in the Secretariat. One day he received from home some sweet called *panjeeri* (it is prepared by frying mixture of flour and sugar in ghee) which no doubt is very delicious. As he had already taken his full meal at the time when the messenger brought it to him, he contented himself with taking one mouthful. He locked his door and proceeded to his office. He had hardly gone a few paces when he was tempted to have another mouthful. He retraced his step, unlocked his door and had another mouthful. This was repeated three or four times. It was only when he was too much surfeited that he went to his office. After three or four hours, he had an attack of

stomach-ache. What happened to the stomach was known to him, but it is a fact that for some months he was ill and he had to go on sick leave. Such is the slavery of these pleasure-affording low-desires.

A STUDENT.—Sir, I do see things happening every day. But how is man compelled to follow the bent of those desires which lead him to harm others ?

TEACHER.—You need to remember one thing, that man is a lover of pleasure. The forces he has developed and which give him pleasure are his masters. He is not concerned with the means as to how he gets those pleasures. If he can get pleasure by getting more money, he would not scruple to take bribes, to sell justice, to forge documents, to perjure himself, to file false suits, to betray his friends, to betray his land, to commit breach of trust and breach of faith, etc. All these are means to his one supreme object of getting pleasure. He, therefore, cannot but adopt them. This is why all these crimes are prevalent in every hamlet, village and town.

A STUDENT.—What is the net result of all these low-loves and low-hates ?

TEACHER.—The net result of all these forces on man is the loss of his constructive power or soul-vitality. This must be very much apparent to you from the fact that he is not able to control himself even in the face of danger and death. Loss of control on ourselves as also a state of being enslaved in the hands of infernal forces of heart is nothing but loss of moral and soul power. After all, what is a man worth who has no moral force or soul-power. He is like a vessel at the mercy of winds and waves with no pilot to steer it on its ways. It is sad that men do not realize the value of this constructive power or soul-power. They go on injuring it to their greatest detriment. But, sad to say that in their soul-unconsciousness they are unaware of this great loss.

A STUDENT.—How does this constructive power develop and get strong ?

TEACHER.—Every altruistic force by building others builds the constructive power of its soul. The one fundamental law of soul is that in building others, man develops his own constructive forces and thereby strengthens himself and in destroying others, he develops his destructive forces and weakens

the chances of the safety of his own soul. Hence all those forces which help to build others, enable man to build himself and all those forces which lead man to harm others, lead him to harm himself. This is the one very paramount truth and those who understand it can realize the wonderful beauty and necessity of freedom from all destructive forces and the development of all constructive forces.

A STUDENT.—Why is it that every man does not realize this wonderful truth ?

TEACHER.—In fact man is not fond of truth or goodness. He is fond of happiness. Therefore, he follows in the wake of such forces which give him happiness, even though they may lead him to falsehood and evil. In this lamentable condition, he is made unfit to realize the truth that happiness is not the goal of life.

A STUDENT.—Is not happiness the goal of life ? All our teachers and philosophers tell us that happiness is the goal of life. But you tell us that happiness is not the goal of life.

TEACHER.—If happiness had been the true ideal of life, we would not have found sin, immorality, falsehoods and all kinds of crimes following in its wake. In no department of human life can happiness be the goal. Even in the physical world it is the health and not happiness which is the true goal of bodily life. In the world of the intellect it is the mental evolution and not mental lethargy which is the goal. In the world of the spirit, it is the evolution of higher life and not the happiness which constitutes the true ideal of man. If happiness and health had been synonymous, the whole world today would have been healthy. If happiness and a noble life had been synonymous, every man in the world would have been noble, as all pursue happiness. But the facts are otherwise.

A STUDENT.—Who can give man freedom from his low-loves and low-hates and develop altruistic feelings in him ?

TEACHER.—The same Devatma whose light can show to man the ugliness of low-loves and low-hates, and the beauty of altruistic feelings and whose *Deva Tej* imparts power to man to destroy their evil forces and to develop altruistic feelings.

A STUDENT.—Sir, will you, in the briefest possible terms tell us what is the goal of human life ?

TEACHER.—Soul-knowledge (*Atma-gyan*) and soul-evolution

(*Atma Kalyan*) constitute the goal of human life.

A STUDENT.—What is the test of the truth that one has evolved ?

TEACHER.—Whatever soul-forces lead one to accept truth and goodness and whatever soul forces lead one to accept falsehood and evil life give man a true criterion of the fact whether the forces that he is developing are evolutionary or dissolutionary. When a man sacrifices truth and goodness in the pursuit of some object, he is on the way to destruction. When he eschews untruth and evil and sticking fast to truth and goodness at any cost, he is on the way to evolution.

A STUDENT.—What is the nature of the constructive power ?

TEACHER.—It is that supremely wonderful power which not only enables the soul to build a body for its residence but to prolong the life itself, besides conferring the capacity on soul to live after death in such regions as are meant by Nature only for noble souls.

A STUDENT.—Is not progressive soul-life possible for man ?

TEACHER.—Life in itself is a conquest. It is an achievement. Every moment that we are living, we are conquering death. When we lose this capacity of conquering death, we collapse and die. The same law rules the world of soul. Every moment that a soul has to live, it has to conquer death and it cannot conquer death unless it is free from those low soul-forces which produce soul diseases and decay. It is, therefore, most essential for man to secure freedom from them. If he neglects them, or worse than that, strengthens them, then he will live only as long as his soul vitality is not exhausted. The day that this vitality is so weakened as not to be able to resist the death influences of these lower soul-forces, it will collapse and die. That is why, on the one hand, it is essential for man to get soul-light and thus be conscious of his ugly low-loves and low-hates and get freedom from them, and, on the other hand, develop death-conquering and life-promoting higher loves.

A STUDENT.—Sir, you want us to understand that freedom from sin and immorality producing forces is a minimum condition for man.

TEACHER.—It is.

A STUDENT.—Sir, you also urge that development of higher forces is compulsory for man.

TEACHER.—It is. Not only is freedom from disease and decay producing low-loves and low-hates and evolution of life-promoting higher forces compulsory for man, but that constitutes his true ideal as a human soul. To get the kingdom of the earth and all that it connotes cannot be the ideal of human soul, as all that is material. The ideal of human soul in anything outside the life of the soul is a vain search and a vain pursuit.

A STUDENT.—If once humanity accepts this view of life it will have to start schools and colleges primarily for the imparting of this knowledge and providing an atmosphere for the freedom of man from diseases and decay-producing low-loves and low-hates and for the evolution of higher loves.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. That is why our society has already established an academy called the Higher Life Training Academy solely and exclusively for this kind of work. Now that you have heard me, you can realize why we people value higher life as a treasure and why we are anxious to make it the supreme quest of life.



## CREDULITY IN PERSONAL RELATIONS

TEACHER.—I am going to speak to-day on the evils of credulity. By credulity I mean a tendency in man to accept as gospel truth what one hears from one's friends, relations, servants, etc., without caring to enquire whether there is any truth in that or not. This weakness in man has produced a lot of misery in the human world. Ordinarily man lacks in the love of truth. He lacks also in strong critical powers which would refuse to accept any absurd thing. He is dominated by self-love and several other low-loves and therefore he is exposed to this terrible weakness.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly give us some illustrations to elucidate the definition of credulity given by you ?

TEACHER.—Yes. Once I was travelling with some of my advocate friends and a *Tehsildar*. This was the time when I was myself practising as an advocate. The *Tehsildar* related a story. He said, "During my recent tour I sent my peon to a wealthy *bania* of a village who was the headman there. My peon came and reported to me that the *bania* said that as he was not free at that time so he was helpless and that he would come and wait upon me the next evening. I got indignant that he had the courage to send such a reply to me. I therefore wanted to inflict upon him condign punishment. He had built a beautiful house and I got my *patwari* to report that the building had been erected on portions of Government land. I at once sent the papers to the higher authority for an order to demolish the building built on Government land without sanction. The *bania* was kept in the dark. Before he became aware of what was happening, as all was kept secret, the orders were issued for demolishing of the house. The work of demolishing began at a time when the *bania* could not go to the higher authorities with any appeal. Before the next day arrived, his house was levelled to the ground. Thereafter the *bania* was brought to his senses."

This was narrated to me more than a quarter of a century ago—perhaps in the year 1912. This story left a very painful impression on my heart about the crimes which are due to credulity. Here the *Tehsildar* swallowed as gospel truth the report of the peon without caring to inquire whether the peon was right or wrong. In fact the report of the peon was terribly exaggerated. His self-love was wounded by the report and he was led to commit a crime which was as dark as it was inhuman. But this is not a solitary example. Destinies of thousands of persons have been ruined, because the peons in confidence of officers possessing power, have been carrying false reports to them.

I want to give you another case. There was a club at a certain place where the lawyers, the judges and the big persons of the town spent their evenings. One of the subordinate Judges was the Secretary of that club. He had to get the monthly subscriptions recovered from the members. His peon was sent to a respectable person with the subscription book. That respectable man was not free at that time and he asked the peon to come again. The peon who was a personal servant of the Judge grew a bit insolent. On this the respectable person told him that he (the peon) should leave his office. Naturally, this exasperated the peon very much. He perhaps believed that as a peon of the Judge he was entitled to all the courtesy which was due to his master and that his insolence should be considered as an expression of righteous indignation. He went and made a false report to the Judge. The Judge at once believed him and in his excited mood he wrote a very offensive letter to that respectable person. This led to a great bitterness between the two. The relation of mutual regard was lost in both. This was also due to the evils of credulity. The respectable person was humiliated not only by the peon but even by the Judge.

One day I was sitting in my office when a gentleman came and narrated to me a very strange experience. He said, "The strength of Mr. A is due to the fact that he has the ear of the officials and they accept what he tells them." I asked him, "Are the officials so credulous that they never wait to enquire into the truth of a report when most of them are holding offices as Judicial officers?" He said, "The tactics usually employed by people who are bent upon mischiefs are these. They form a

conspiracy. Every one of them so arranges his interview with the officer whom they have to influence that every week only one of them goes and sees him. He would then give him a report against the person whom they all intend to harm. The next week another man goes and gives similar report against the victim. This continues for eight or ten weeks and the official is so much poisoned that all efforts of the victim to clarify his position prove of no avail to him. This is how lots of persons have been harmed."

A STUDENT.—Sir, this is terrible.

TEACHER.—What is your attitude ? I have been surprised to see that students are the most credulous people and therefore they give easy credence even to the most foolish things. Once I was in my office waiting to take a class in translation. One boy went and told another that I was too busy to take the class. This was a false report. But it was accepted by most of you as true. The result was that it being the last period most of you left the college. This is what happened recently. Similarly, acting upon this weakness of man, people succeed in destroying the peace of families.

A STUDENT.—How is the peace in a family destroyed by this ?

TEACHER.—In one of the novels by an Indian author, I read a case which is absolutely true to life. A father left two sons. One of them was in high position and the other who was born very late was just schooling. When the father died, he entrusted his younger son to his elder brother and requested him to look after the boy. The boy was brought up in indulgent love and therefore proved to be good-for-nothing. He developed the art of playing on musical instruments but learnt no profession. He also married. He got a son. His wife was a very good woman. She knew that her husband was good-for-nothing. She, therefore, laboured hard in order to win the good-will of her brother-in-law and his wife. This wife of the elder brother was a terrible woman. She wanted somehow to get rid of them. One day a hawker came to sell toys. The child of the good-for-nothing man appealed to his mother to get a toy for him. It was worth one pice. The poor mother went to her sister-in-law to get one <sup>7</sup>pice. The sister-in-law refused. The toy had to be returned. The child wept and

his mother wept. This sister-in-law thereupon kicked up a row and said that she was not bound to purchase luxuries for good-for-nothing people when already they were a burden on her. When her husband came from the office she gave him such a terribly exaggerated and varnished tale about the incident that the credulous husband lost his temper and that very night without any enquiry he expelled his helpless brother with his helpless wife and their child. This is what is happening in most of the families. The credulous husbands listen to the reports of their wives and they break all tender ties with their parents, brothers and sisters.

A STUDENT.—Sir, does it mean that we should trust nobody ?

TEACHER.—It is impossible not to trust anybody. Our life will be impossible if we do not trust, but what is necessary is that when we get any adverse report against anybody, we should suspend our judgment for a time and make inquiries. Ordinarily adverse reports are either altogether manufactured or are exaggerated tales or completely hearsay. In such circumstances to pass an ex-party decree is one of the gravest injustices to the victim. I know of a gentleman who really came to the brink of tears when I told him that a certain gentleman who had heard something against him believed that report and was displeased with him. This victim of false report said, "Was it not due from him that he should have inquired from me about this false report ? Is it not a grave injustice that a man who has to suffer by an adverse report should not be informed of it even ?" His pathetic words moved me very much. I felt that it was a high crime to accept as gospel truth an adverse report made against any man without discrimination and without inquiry from the party concerned.

A STUDENT.—Where is the need of inquiry when we know that a guilty person rarely admits his fault and the man who gives us his report is a trustworthy man ?

TEACHER.—In a judicial court your argument will not be accepted in spite of the fact that an accused man rarely admits his crime. Justice demands that a thorough inquiry should be made into the charge laid against any person. Again, it is not improbable that the man who gives the report may misunderstand the position. I know of a very pertinent

case which came within my experience. Once a fight was going on with our opponents. The enemy side had published a leaflet against us which was being distributed or put up on the walls. A very reliable man came and told our party that one Mr. A who was our friend was distributing the leaflets published against us. One of us sent the information to his father. Mr. A was taken seriously to task by his father. He at once came running to us and said, "Friends, it is true that I was holding in my hand the leaflets but how I came to hold them is a story. The man who was pasting them on a wall wanted something from a shopkeeper. He requested me, as he was known to me, to hold the leaflets for a time as he was returning within a short while. I must have held the leaflets only for a minute or two when he came and took them from me." This story was also confirmed by independent evidence. You can see, then, how very wrong it is to believe a hearsay report against anybody without making an inquiry.

A STUDENT.—Sir, this example is very impressive.

TEACHER.—I give you another actual case. One Mr. A was a friend of Mr. B. Mr. B was betrothed to a girl of a rich family who was also known to be beautiful. Mr. A happened to go to the house of the fiancée of his friend and as the girl was shy, she sat all the time in a corner with one hand pressed on one side of her face covering one eye. Mr. A believed that she was hiding the eye because she was either squint eyed or one eyed. Without caring to verify his suspicion, he came and gave his report to Mr. B. Mr. B very foolishly accepted the version and was for many days passing through miserable thoughts till at last he determined to break the betrothal. His mother who saw him brooding asked him what the trouble was. He opened his heart to her. The mother laughed out-right. She said to her son, "Foolish child, you believe that stupid friend of yours and you do not believe your mother who has seen her not once but hundreds of times. She is not only possessed of two sound eyes but she possesses more beautiful eyes than those of all the women of Mr. A's family." She then managed to show the girl to him. You can see here how credulity would have destroyed a home, and the young man a chance of marrying a very beautiful wife with whom he lived after marriage for many years as a devoted husband. It is true

that Mr. A did not deliberately manufacture the report. Some people even do that out of jealousy and a spirit of mischief-making. He concluded from a wrong premise that because the girl's hand had hid her eye, therefore, she must be squint or one eyed. This is how hearsays are most terrible, and those who depend upon these are bound to suffer in life, and make others suffer.

In several cases I have seen that one family easily comes into disrepute if anything is circulated against it. If one of their members died of T.B., it is the easiest thing to get a lie accepted that the entire family is suffering from T.B. The result is that the family is simply ignored and high families do not seek matrimonial relations with them.

A STUDENT.—Sir, I can now see why it is necessary to hesitate to accept an adverse report against anybody even though it may be made by a friend, because it does not rule out the possibility of a friend having made an honest mistake.

TEACHER.—I give another true instance. One day one Mr. A found one of the newly married brides in his family talking to a servant at one corner of the house. He concluded that she was getting too free with the servant. He reported the matter to her husband. The husband was very much shocked and without telling his wife what the trouble was he ceased speaking with her. This poor girl wept very much, fell at the feet of her husband and apologized for any wrong she might have committed. She requested him to tell her what the trouble was. When the husband told her about his suspicion about her conduct, she gave a wild shriek and half fainted away. When she came to her senses, her condition was inconsolable. The husband was hard put to soothe her spirits. He then told her how his suspicion grew and how a relation of his had seen her talking to a servant in a corner of the house. It was then that she realized the horror of their mistake. She said, "It is true that I was speaking with the servant and in a corner all alone. The next day was your birthday. I was anxious to present you with something. I was feeling too shy to ask my mother-in-law to get me the present. I had money of my own as you know and I requested the servant to bring secretly the thing to me. As you got displeased with me I could not muster up courage to make a present of it to you. My antici-

pated joys of celebrating your birthday were dashed to the ground and my happiness turned into misery." So saying she rushed into her room and brought the beautiful present which she had got for her husband. The husband felt deeply ashamed. It is true that the reporter had seen the incident, but the conclusion that he drew was wrong. An innocent thing may be converted into a serious thing. The result turns out to be horrible.

You can, then, realize how a report made even by an honest man can be a completely wrong and unjust one. Several reports made by third parties lack even this trait. Man is lazy and credulous. He believes and creates trouble. We should therefore be on our guard.

## CREDULITY AT MASS LEVEL

TEACHER.—It is to this weakness of man that we owe oft-recurring riots in India and even mob hysteria. One of my friends told me that he was coming by a lorry which was bound for some distant station. One of the occupants was a muslim gentleman. The lorry had to go by a particular route which did not lie in the locality to which the muslim occupant had to go. But he asked the lorry driver to go *via* that locality. The lorry driver said that his route did not lie through that place and that he was, therefore, helpless. Now when the lorry passed through another muslim locality this occupant asked the lorry driver to stop and when he did so, he got down but he refused to pay him the fare. He at once raised hue and cry and his co-religionists came out. Without so much as hearing the story of the driver all his friends assumed a threatening attitude because the man falsely said that the lorry driver had promised to take him to his locality and that he had refused to do so. It was feared that they would lay violent hands on the driver. Thereupon my friend said, "I got down and appealed to them to listen to the other side." He then narrated to them the entire situation and in order to win them he said, "Let your friend deduct from the hire the amount he will have to pay to the tonga driver to take him to his locality. The amount was not more than one anna. He said that he was very much hard put to in convincing the friends of that passenger that the latter was in the wrong. If my friend had not got down, there would have been a riot. What a terrible weakness is man's credulity and his marked tendency for what is false ?

A STUDENT.—Sir, this indeed is very painful.

TEACHER.—Sometimes this credulity is taken advantage of by the most mischievous people. In my own town a terrible disaster was averted by the prompt arrival of the Executive Officer and the military. A mischievous man, who was



ultimately traced, threw in a religious place some torn pages of a sacred book and then gave out that the people belonging to the opposite faith had done so and thus wounded the religious feelings of that community. There was an instant *hartal* and the people at once locked their doors and kept inside. All the streets put on inhospitable deserted appearance. It was feared that there would be a general loot, but all this calamity was averted because the Executive Officer was very prompt. If men were not so credulous they would not get so easily excited, nor would there be any chance for any conflagration. This credulity of man (i.e., readiness to accept lying propaganda) is the strongest weapon in the hands of the agitators but the irony of the situation is that those who are misled by the agitators hardly realize how they are made fools of. In *The Illustrated Weekly of India* for September 18, 1938, there is a very thought-provoking article on "Where are Indian Strikes Leading?" The author has given facts and figures to show what a terrible economic loss the country has suffered because of the strikes led and managed by agitators. He writes :—

"Last year no fewer than 8,982,000 working days were lost owing to industrial disputes and strikes. Bengal, the home of the Jute industry, and highly favoured with the attentions of the theoretical agitators lost over six million days, Bombay lost nearly 900,000 days and the United Provinces lost over 63,000 days. It is easier to appreciate what these figures mean when expressed in terms of loss of money to the country and to the 648,000 workers involved in these troubles."

"An average loss of wage of eight annas a day per worker concerned is not an excessive estimate of the deprivation involved since many of them would earn daily more than the sum. Eight million nine hundred and eighty-two thousand days at eight annas a day equals to Rupees 44,91,000 or nearly fortyfive lakhs of rupees. That is a lot of money to waste and it will be enough to build and equip several industrial establishments."

What a terrible loss !

The writer rightly says :—

"Would there not be more sense in agitators turning themselves into practical helpers and advising the workers concerned to collect that sum while at work, rather than deprive them-

selves of it by not working, and to invest it in new industrial enterprises in which they could also find employment, i.e., assuming they had any substantial grievances prompting the strikes.

“Strikes in the Indian Cotton Mill Industry over the past ten years have easily lost the workers in wages over five hundred lakhs of rupees, and over twenty-five Mills could have been built and equipped with that sum.”

A STUDENT.—Sir, this is an eye-opener ! But why do the agitators mislead the workmen ?

TEACHER.—To this the writer gives a very pertinent reply. He says :—

“The only people who defend strikes at all are those whose motive—as often hidden as it is openly avowed—is political. Their aim is to create social discord and foment class hatred because they want to over-throw society and introduce what they call communism which is something unpleasantly different in fact from what it is in theory.”

Every agitator has a set object to achieve. As a rule the agitator is not always scrupulous about the means which he employs. The same writer at another place says :—

“Workmen have now realized that strike fanatics who led them up the garden path to a barren rockery care very little about economic reality.”

I shall be glad if the workmen did so realize. But before the realization came to them how many lakhs must have suffered the agony of starvation and the tortures of uncertain life. This is all because they were credulous. They accepted as gospel truth what the strike fanatics told them. Millions of rupees had been lost because the workmen were credulous.

A STUDENT.—Sir, mass credulity is far more dangerous than individual credulity.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. But mass credulity is also born of individual credulity. In the hands of the religious fanatics this has led to massacres on a huge scale. Let it but be circulated that a particular man has used words derogatory to the reputation of this or that prophet and the poor man is condemned unheard. Even attempts would be made on his life. I have also personal experience of this mob credulity. Some mischievous men circulated against me a lie that I had

used words derogatory to the reputation of a distinguished politician. This was an *absolute* lie, and yet it is surprising that people went on believing and propagating it without caring so much as to inquire from me whether the allegation was correct. Even some of the political leaders came and thundered against me from a platform without having given me a hearing. I published the repudiation of the allegation and propagated it. It is surprising that the readiness with which they have accepted the allegation against me was absent in them when I published the facts in my defence. It seems that most of them did not like to be undeceived. Such is the fascination that man in general possesses for slander. They were anxious to believe the allegations against me but they did not relish the idea of being disabused. You can, therefore, see what crimes are laid at the door of credulity.

A STUDENT.—This is indeed painful.

TEACHER.—It is this weakness of man which the agitators take the fullest advantage of when they try to persecute a man of new ideas. Socrates was made to drink the cup of hemlock because the people of his time believed a lie and a slander that he was corruptor of youths. He taught new ideas and therefore everybody was prepared to believe everything against him. There was a mob hysteria. And even those who were occupying the seats of High Justice were equally swept off their feet by their own credulity. In crucifying Christ the same weakness of man was exploited by the agitators. It seems that humanity has no discrimination between what is true and what is false. It believes the word of those for whom they have pre-possession against those in whom either they are not interested or against whom they are prejudiced. If man were less credulous and more critical the strikes and riots, mob hysteria and crimes would be materially reduced.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly give us an illustration of how credulity has led to crimes in our own days?

TEACHER.—When the first World War of 1914 was going on, a lie was circulated in one of the Frontier provinces that the Germans had defeated the English. This lie was easily believed both by the masses and the classes. The result was that the criminals in those provinces broke loose. Lots of houses were looted and lives endangered. It was the strong arm

of the Government which quelled this rising, otherwise it is not known what would have been the fate of our poor land.

A STUDENT.—Would you give us some examples from History, Sir ?

TEACHER.—If you read the chapter on Mutiny, you will find that the religious feelings of the sepoys were exploited by the agitators with a surprising success. The Hindus and Muslims were informed that the skin of the forbidden animals was being used in the making of cartridges. Before any attempt could be made to convince the sepoys, there was an outbreak in several places. Besides this, if you read the story of revolutions you will find that most of the things propagated are either wholly wrong or only half truths and the humanity being credulous, they succeed eminently.

A STUDENT.—Do such things happen in institutions also ?

TEACHER.—They do. Schools and colleges of a denomination are easily brought into disrepute by circulating a lie that in these schools all other religions are abused. I have myself observed this in several cases. Nowadays, when communalism is being cried down the one easy way to poison the officials against any institution is to circulate a lie that the institution is teaching communalism. Saddest part of it is that officers from the top to the bottom have not got the patience to inquire whether the allegation is true or false. All that one hears is their complaint that communalism is being taught in that institution, when the fact is that there is not even the slightest touch of it.

How this credulity is exploited sometimes by selfish priests is surprising. There was a temple of a Devi. The priest was making a fat income. Another priest went and asked him to share the income with him or he would take away the devi or goddess from him. The priest could not understand how this intruder would take away the goddess from him. But the intruder did succeed. He went to his village and taught a girl to pretend that she was possessed by the goddess. The girl who seems to have been a good actor played her part very well. The men who saw and heard her, believed that the goddess was telling them that as she was dissatisfied with her old priest and the people there she wanted them to build a temple for her in their village. This news spread like a wild fire and the

villagers built a temple to that goodess. The result was that all worshippers began to crowd to the new temple and the old temple was deserted. The priest of the old temple felt unhappy and even told the people how the new priest had played the trick upon them but no one listened to him. This is how the cunning priest exploited the mob credulity and opened for himself a way of subsistence and maintenance. All the tomb worship, Samadhi worship, temple worship of several goddesses that we find at different places, have their basis in this mob credulity of man.

A STUDENT.—How can this malady go ?

TEACHER.—It is light which expels darkness. What the humanity requires is the light of true knowledge which might develop in man *appreciation of truth* and a capacity for sifting truth from untruth. If man were awakened to the fact that Nature has given to man a true test of sifting truths from untruths and if he were to develop love for it, those countless evils which flow from individual and mass credulity would disappear.

## CREDULITY MAKES US SUPERSTITIOUS

TEACHER—Boys, I give you an incident of my own life which shall reveal to you how superstitions die hard. When I was in college, one of my class-mates induced me and two others to go to a great *fakir* to have a charm (*taveez*) from him. This *fakir* was well-known for his purity and integrity. He never allowed anybody to touch his hands or any other part of his body. When he came, he extended his covered hand to us. It was covered in a white sheet. This is how he allowed us to touch his hand. He was kind enough to give one charm to each of us. Equipped with these charms, we went and appeared in the University Examination. When the result was out, I was surprised to find that the two students who were really weak, actually failed. While I and one other, who were expected to get through by our teacher, succeeded. This set me athinking and I came to the conclusion that charm was merely a consolation and what really availed us was hard study. Next year also we had to appear for the University Examination. The student who had previously induced me to accompany him to the great *fakir* again asked me to go with him and get the charm from him. I refused. He and two other students went. When the result was out, I alone passed, while all those students who had got the charms failed. After their failure, I just asked them, "Do you still retain faith in the charms?" They said, "Yes." One of those students took twelve years to pass his Intermediate and B.A. examinations and yet he retained his faith in charms. That is why, I say, that superstitions die hard.

A STUDENT.—Is there no efficacy in the charms, Sir?

TEACHER.—No. If you apply the method of experiment, you will find that it has got no efficacy at all. You get a charm to pass in History, Philosophy, Mathematics, English, etc. Now just make an experiment. If the wearer can get efficiency in these subjects the writer of the charms must be able to get

more. You just go and see whether the writer of the charms gets any knowledge at all. If he cannot himself gain any knowledge how can you, simple wearer of his charm, gain it? Besides this, knowledge is not a gift which can fall into our lap from anywhere. It has to be acquired. If a man wants a good handwriting, he must practice efficient writing. Without making any effort to write, he will never acquire good handwriting. In the same way the facts of History and Philosophy have to be learnt and if we want to remember them, we have to memorize them. We cannot learn all these facts by mere blessings of any person. Hence, in order to be a good student what is required is hard study and intelligent learning at the feet of the teachers. Take away both these conditions and the student will remain ignorant.

A STUDENT.—It is very difficult for us to believe, Sir, that a charm has no efficacy in making us pass the examination.

TEACHER.—My appeal shall be only to reason and facts. Persons who are given to superstitions generally commit the fallacy of non-observation or mal-observation. Belief in the efficacy of a charm, e.g., rests on remembering one or two instances in which the wearer of the charm, through natural causes, has passed the examination and ignoring the number of cases in which people for lack of similar causes have failed. The positive instances are taken into consideration and the negative ones, which are sometimes many more in number than the positive instances, are disregarded. I remember the case of a Rai Bahadur who was a contractor. He was considered to be a wizard contractor. He contracted a very serious malady. He had faith in the tomb of a certain *fakir*. He was taken there and placed in a hut near the tomb and treated with no medicine. The result was inevitable. The malady having been neglected grew serious. The man died. Even after his death when I sounded his relatives whether they had seen the mistake of their actions, I was disappointed to find that their faith remained intact. I asked them, "Have you kept record of those who were never cured though taken to the Pir's tomb?" They said, "No". But they quoted one or two instances where the miracle had worked according to their belief. I asked them if they had verified those instances. They replied, "There is no need to verify them. They are so very well-known." With such

people experiment and logical test are of no value.

A STUDENT.—Why does not logical test or experimental investigation command any respect with these people ?

TEACHER.—Love of superstition is with such person like love for their own child, or something dearer than that. And as they are not able to hear anything against their beloved ones, however reasonable it may be, so they are not able to hear anything against their superstitions, however reasonable that may be. Love of every wrong and fanciful belief does a great harm to man. It disables him from accepting facts.

I know that there is a strong belief prevalent among a number of people that some *sadhus* and *fakirs* possess a miraculous herb by which they can convert a base metal into gold. Millions of people have been duped by these *sadhus* and *fakirs*. But it is surprising that the belief continues even upto today. Even prosecutions have been launched against the imposters who have cheated these superstitious people of their money. The imposters have also been convicted. In spite of all this a superstitious faith in their miraculous power persists. When I was an advocate I come across a case of a Pathan who had collected Rs. 500 by hard work and economy and by remaining away from his native place for years. He happened to come across a *fakir* who was a notorious cheat and yet he commanded great reverence from the masses. This *fakir* robbed the poor Pathan of all his money on the pretext that he was going to convert the baser metal into gold. The court was pleased to convict the cheat. But even after he came out of the jail, reverence for him ruled the hearts of the masses.

A STUDENT.—What is a superstition ordinarily due to, Sir ?

TEACHER.—It is due to the belief that a man can work miracles. By man I mean a *sadhu* or a *fakir*. It is believed that some of these *sadhus* and *fakirs* can override the laws of Nature. They are supposed to possess the power of blessing a barren woman with a child, a poor man with money, an accused person with an acquittal, a sick man with a cure. Besides this, they are supposed to possess a power to destroy a person by a curse.

A STUDENT.—Do not *sadhus* possess a power to curse which may prove disastrous ?

TEACHER.—You educated boys have to realize one fact,



that all our life in all its various phases is subject to the sovereignty of immutable and universal laws and that nothing can take place against a law. It is idle to believe that by a curse man can produce anything which is opposed to laws of Nature. I give you an instance of my life. When I was studying in a college and returned on vacation, I was surprised one day to see a sensation prevalent among the women of the street. When I enquired from one of them what the matter was she said, "Today a *fakir* came and he began to threaten us with curses if we did not pay him what he demanded. And out of fear we gave him what he wanted." I felt deeply pained. I told them that I would be waiting in my house next day and if the *fakir* came they should call me. Next day that *fakir* actually came. He had come to realize that his fear had worked upon the women. I entered the house of one of the ladies whom he had cheated the day before. He came there. With a face uplifted on one side, "You women, are you going to give me money or not? If you don't....." Before he completed the sentence, I gave him a slap on his upturned cheek and he stood at ease. When he looked at me, he folded his hands and said, "Don't beat me. This is the only means to maintain ourselves." The woman who was standing nearby became terror stricken that I would perhaps fall under the curse of the man. All were surprised to see that the wind was taken out of the sail of the *fakir* and like a stricken coward he ran away and never came back. During my own life I have had many occasions to come into grip with people who were alleged to possess the efficacy of curse and I know that this fear is as stupid as any other fear born of superstition.

Again, how far this superstition of a *fakir's* power to bless a woman with child can go, can be seen from an instance which came under my notice. I was a boy of thirteen or fourteen years of age when I happened to pass through a street in my town where I found several women gathered round a *fakir*. All of them were praying to him to bless them with a child. This scoundrel asked every one of these superstitious women to bring a cup of water and he actually spat into each cup and asked the women to drink. This injunction was zealously followed by each one of the women present. I expressed my deep disgust at the conduct of that villian but the women

took his side. This is how superstitions demoralize the intellect of women and men.

A STUDENT.—Sir, cannot a *sadhu* or a *fakir* confer the boon of a child on a barren woman ?

TEACHER.—No. It is absurd. If you know the biology of the birth of a child you would simply laugh at this. Child is a product of human parents and not a gift from outside. Where there are no parents there are no children. It often happens that a woman is not in a fit condition to bear a child and so she does not get a child. But it *also* happen that sometimes her generative functions undergo such a change that she comes to have a child-bearing condition and she conceives after years of barren condition. In many cases the defect is removed by an operation or by medicine. There is no factory of children existing any where, where-from a ready-made human child is ordered by a *fakir* or a *sadhu* in the womb of the woman. How this imposture was practised upon a woman was related lately in my College by a servant who was once a *fakir*. He said that he had gone to a certain village in the guise of a *sannyasi* and took his seat under a tree and engaged himself in prayers. Within a day or two his dress and posture attracted attention and men and women began to come to him for some of their desires to be realized. Along with others a seth's wife also came to him and prayed for a child. He said that as was his wont, he raised his hand and blessed the woman that she would have a child. After some time he left the village. When next year he went back, the seth and his wife loaded him with gifts and honours because they said that his blessings had got them a child. I asked him, "Did you possess any knowledge of any shastras or any other mantras which you could recite while blessing them ? He said, "I know nothing. You know I am a servant here. I am myself struggling to maintain myself. But these foolish people consider every one who comes in the garb of a *sannyasi* to be a gifted being. When ten persons come to us and we tell all of them that they shall have children one or two may be blessed with a child even otherwise. It is these persons who sing our praises and provide us with our living."

If only this superstition were removed most of the impostures and even crimes in sex matters would disappear. I know from personal knowledge how some of the *sadhus* and *fakirs*

destroy the honour and purity of homes by winning the close intimacy of the women by working on their superstitious nature.

A STUDENT.—You think, Sir, that no *sadhu* or *fakir* can by his blessings make a poor man rich ?

TEACHER.—I wish you could understand that the means of getting wealth are well-known. None of them includes the blessing of a *fakir* as a distinct chapter of any book on careers. I remember how a juggler one day described his own condition. While showing his tricks he took off the cap of one man and as he shook it about twenty rupees fell out of it. Thereupon the juggler said, "Friends, do not believe that I have it in my power to command money. If I had that power I would not come and show tricks to you." If the *sadhu* and *fakirs* had been honest enough they too would have said the same thing. They would have frankly proclaimed, "Our blind followers, had it been in our power to command money, why would we have stood in need of having money from you. Our claim that we can make you rich is one of the potent instruments in working on your superstitions and diverting some portion of your money to our pockets." In order to get rich when one is poor, he has to follow certain laws which have been now scientifically studied and codified into books. To depend upon the blessing of a *sadhu* is to waste one's precious time.

A STUDENT.—How should we know that a certain belief of ours is a superstition or a truth ?

TEACHER.—The never-failing criterion in your hand is this: What conforms to the facts and laws of Nature is to be believed as true and whatever militates against them is to be taken as false and superstitious. If a man were to tell us that he is going to get us *poories* and *pakor*s from a tree, we shall put it down as a ridiculous claim. The *poories* and *pakor*s can be prepared by frying flour and gram flour in ghee or oil and not by harvesting them from a tree. In the same way, if a man were to say that he has it in his power to convert a man into a lamb, you must put it down as a huge joke of the man who has no sound brain in his head. If a man were to claim that he is going to get an absolutely barren woman a child, dismiss that claim as a hoax. If a man were to tell you that he has a spirit in his power which can remove a building from one

place to another or take a man high to the skies or bring in a minute the treasury of America here or similar foolish things, believe him to be an imposter. In the same way, you should not believe that you can get knowledge without study; get harvest without sowing; get clothes without spinning and weaving; get success in business without hard work, etc. You should not believe that maladies can be cured by praying at this or that tomb, by getting this or that charm, by pleasing this or that goddess in any temple. The maladies have to be cured by doctors and by obeying the laws of Nature. All that man can achieve in life is possible only through hard application and fulfilment of the necessary laws. Depending upon the good words of this or that *fakir* or on the stars in heavens is to depend on the charter of accident. It is our bounden duty, therefore, to get our mind to realize the fact that eternal laws rule every aspect of our life and that if we have to succeed anywhere we should try to discover the laws which can help us to achieve success. It does not lie in the hands of one man or any combination of men to change this fact or to destroy any law of Nature or to do anything which is opposed to the laws of Nature. Consciousness of the universality of law would deal a death blow to every form of superstition. And it is the aim of education to develop this consciousness in youngmen and women. It is surprising how the students of Science and Philosophy, History and Mathematics who study the facts and laws which rule the world, forget all their learning when they go home and become as much subject to superstitions as if they were old women. This is indeed a painful experience about educated men and women and it is this which makes one to say, "Superstitions die hard."

## VANITY ABOUT ONE'S BODILY QUALITIES

TEACHER.—Dear boys, to-day I want to talk to you about vanity—the most besetting scourge of mankind.

A STUDENT.—What do you mean by vanity, Sir?

TEACHER.—When a man develops love for his own self to such an abnormal extent that he considers his body—every organ or part of his body—his bodily health, his intelligence, his power of reasoning, his power of expression, his education, his beliefs and cherished doctrines, not only par excellent and free of every blemish, but falsely believes them to be superior to that of others and falsely considers and believes others to be inferior to him in these and other respects, he becomes vain.

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly illustrate this?

TEACHER.—Once I was standing in one of the lanes of Delhi just opposite a small shop which was decorated with a big wall-mirror, when my attention was suddenly attracted to the mirror. It reflected the face of a domestic servant who took his stand before it. He wore a dirty cap. Half of it was covered with grease and dirt. His face was unusually uncomplimentary and yet he took pride in looking at it and remained busy for long in arranging the angle of his cap on his head. I felt amused at the vanity of this man. He was ugly and yet he felt himself beautiful. His cap was dirty and yet he felt it to be a crown which he had to adjust on his head.

A STUDENT.—Sir, why could he not realize the folly of what he was doing?

TEACHER.—That is the spell which vanity casts on its victims.

Once I had gone to the private residence of a magistrate to take a date for my case. The magistrate was not well. Some other pleaders also had come there. We were waiting in the drawing room when suddenly his domestic servant came there. We were all amazed to see the vanity of this servant. He took

his master's mirror and began adjusting his dirty cap on his rather uncomplimentary face. In spite of the fact that we were all looking at him with amused contempt, he continued feasting his eyes on the fancied beauty of his face. Don't you think what a blinding influence vanity casts on man ?

A STUDENT.—Decidedly yes, Sir.

TEACHER.—A third case that came within my personal experience is rather excusable. I was then 10 or 11 years of age. A neighbour of ours—a well-to-do shopkeeper—was not able to get a bride. In his community there was paucity of girls. The only eligible bridegrooms were the educated boys or the sons of very wealthy people. After painful waiting, this man could get a very dark and ugly girl for whom he had to pay a lot to her parents. He literally worshipped her. She had thousands of rupees worth ornaments and jewellery on her person. She had a tiny mirror fixed in her ring. I found her making most frequent use of that mirror in feasting her eyes on the so-called beauty of her face. Even though myself and my friends were children, we could not help laughing at her vanity. Because her husband worshipped her and her neighbours envied her jewellery and ornaments, she began to have a wrong view of her beauty and accomplishments. She used to look with contempt on far more beautiful women than herself and in fact considered herself more attractive than them because her husband seemed to feel so. Such is the spell of vanity.

A STUDENT.—Is not vanity about beauty a common failing of women ?

TEACHER.—It is a common failing of men and women both. I have heard and known of several college students who spend half an hour or even an hour to produce a certain curve of their hair and in changing one suit after another in order to see which fits them best. Vanity about beauty is a common failing of men and women alike.

A STUDENT.—Does it, Sir, produce any unhappy results for the vain person ?

TEACHER.—In one of the lessons, I have quoted a fable of a crow—the ugliest bird—having a morsel in its beak. A fox wanted that piece of cheese for himself. He hit upon tickling the vanity of the crow. He began by praising him as the most

beautiful bird. The crow swallowed that bait. Hence when the fox appealed to him to sing, the crow opened its mouth to regale the fox with his music. The piece of cheese fell down. The fox took it and went his way.

In this fable lies a great truth as to how vanity deludes the victim and exposes him to danger.

A STUDENT.—Will you please illustrate it from our social life ?

TEACHER.—If you walk with open eyes, you will find scattered all around the bones of the victimized human beings. Girls and boys are the easiest victims to it. A married woman fell into the meshes of a married man because the latter found her in half-covered condition and exclaimed in flattering surprise what a wonderful beauty she was. A betrothed girl of a good family fell into the net of a priest whom she knew to be a married man having wife and children, because he would fall into raptures in praise of her beauty. She eloped with him. A really ugly girl was induced by a cunning trafficker in women to leave her house since he poured into her ears words of praise about her unique beauty. She knew and realized the tragedy of her fate too late and was ruined for ever. In the same way, a beautiful young boy was led to his death by a bad character who fed his vanity too much to leave any chance for him to see where the danger lay.

A STUDENT.—I never considered vanity about beauty of body so dreadful!

TEACHER.—Vanity is dreadful because it perverts our vision and makes us see what is absolutely false, to be something absolutely true.

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly deal with some other aspect of vanity ?

TEACHER.—There is vanity of physical health and strength.

Once, years ago, I went to Sindh Canal in my native town where I was shocked to hear that an only son of wealthy parents had been drowned. I naturally asked the by-standers whether the young man knew swimming or not. I was promptly told that he was one of the best swimmers. It was this that betrayed him to death. He was told by his comrades that he had no match in diving and in duration of keeping under water. A man contested this claim of this vain young man. The

bet was laid. Both dived. The challenger not being able to keep any longer under water came up and acknowledged defeat. But the vain young man was under water still. Time passed and he did not come up. His comrades took the hint. They ransacked the waters. The young man could not be traced. News was sent to his parents. After hours of labour his dead body was recovered. His bloated vanity that he had no match in the power of endurance proved a means of his premature death. In this way one whole family was ruined.

A STUDENT.—This is horrible !

TEACHER.—Indeed so. I know of a young boy who told a veteran runner that he could go the rounds which he (the veteran runner) could go. This was vanity pure and simple. The race began. The result was a foregone conclusion. The foolish young man strained too much. For two years he was in bed from the ill effects of the strain.

In the same way, only recently a zaminder died. He was getting his house built. Perhaps a labourer quarrelled and left him. He who was unaccustomed to labour, stepped into his place. In spite of warnings which he received from his friends and which he treated with contempt, he took his place at the top to receive the heaviest baskets. He had to bend and carry them. He worked for hours. When he went home, the acute pain due to strain began to cause agony to him. He had overstrained himself and in spite of the medical help, he succumbed.

Vanity about physical strength and health deprives us of the power of having a true estimate of them. The danger lurks at every step. And if we lose all true perspectives of things we fall an easy prey.

A STUDENT.—I had no idea that vanity was so dangerous!

TEACHER.—It is in fact the most dangerous single feeling in man. It is sad, mankind does not pay attention to these heart forces and does not realize that dangers, which lie in our path, are created by these wrong heart forces.

Do you know why there is no team spirit in most of our games. Last year a cricket team was sent to England. The general complaint was that there was no team spirit. A player would not like even to wait for the turn settled by the Captain. He would consider himself the best. He would grumble at the position settled for him in the field. He would feel himself



best in a particular position judged best by him. He would make himself the judge of his ability and also a judge of the ability of all others. He would vote for himself in the first place and he would assign an inferior place to many or all others. Such is the danger of vanity in a corporate life.

A STUDENT.—It never struck us before that vanity spoils even our team games.

TEACHER.—Vanity spoils everything. In our own college, I had to suffer a lot by such an attitude of the players. One player was considered to be a very good goal-keeper. But he wanted to play as a forward. This young man spoiled our game and by his vanity lost us our strength in the matches. In the same way, a boy who was always irritable and quarrelsome, considered himself to be the best Captain and all the rest as beneath him, and hence the authorities decided to exclude him from the team altogether. He gave us infinite trouble. If man were to be a judge of his own powers and the powers of others, he would, as a rule, vote first place for himself and second or no place for others.

A STUDENT.—This aspect of vanity is highly dangerous. Does it harm the team only or the vain man, too ?

TEACHER.—When vanity leads a man to have false estimate of his physical powers and prowess—and I have confined myself in this lecture to body alone—he cannot but harm himself.

It was at Sukkur that I came across some instances. I was going to Rohri in a tonga when I had to cross the famous bridge which was under repairs. A young man standing on an iron girder was swinging to and fro at the height of about 15 feet. I felt that the youth would die if by any means he lost hold of the iron railing over his head. His boss also issued a warning to him. Several persons standing there also reprimanded him. But he thought all were fools who felt nervous at his feat. I returned after two or three hours in the same tonga when I was told that the young man had actually lost his balance and dropped on the rails below and became unconscious. He was taken to the hospital where he expired.

A STUDENT.—What a self-sought punishment due to vanity !

TEACHER.—At the same bridge another incident took place. A young man was posted on duty at the bridge. While off

duty he would get into the train while it passed the bridge and alight at a place near his house. Some trains passed at slow speed but some had greater speed. Several times he was requested by the guards and drivers and some of his friends to give up the risky attempt. But he would not listen to them. One day while attempting to catch the handle of a door of a wagon he missed it. He went under the wheels of the train and was crushed to pieces. Vanity took him to an early grave. He plunged his entire family into a gloom and sorrow which hung over them for years.

A STUDENT.—This malady, Sir, is common to youth. I have myself seen in my own case and in those of others that we deliberately get down on the platform while the train is in motion and then we also try to get into it when it is moving. In this also nothing but vanity plays the part. We call this vanity a spirit of bravery.

TEACHER.—Vanity disables a man to see that no good accrues out of his stupid action. Even railway rules demand that we should not get into a train while it is in motion. Vanity makes a man defy good rules and laws based upon reason and accumulated experience.

Once a great tragedy was averted. A vain young man was to travel with me. I had asked him to come in time. He would not care. I found him elbowing his way to the platform when the train was in motion. I shouted at him not to attempt entry into the running train. But he did not mind my warning. I had to open the door as he ran towards the compartment occupied by me. He jumped in. It was a terrible moment for us all passengers when we saw that he was losing his hold. All rushed to help him. He was saved. But oh ! what a hair breadth escape he had from sure death ! Vanity indeed is the cause of man's ruin.

When the above young man recovered from the stunning experience, we, all of us, rebuked him for his foolhardiness and he laughed at us all as if we were a pack of noodles or ninnie or old women. Vain people attribute such actions of theirs to their spirit of adventure. And why should they not ? If vanity does not defend itself it will meet the doom it deserves and leave its victim an humble and therefore a sane soul.

A STUDENT.—With regard to body, does vanity assume

other forms also.

TEACHER.—Once a student boasted that even after he had had a full meal, he could drink all the milk that lay in the pan of a confectioner. The boys challenged him. Had the young boy realized that we are subject to laws and that our body has limitations which we must accept and acknowledge, he would not have taken up the challenge. But he did. He drank most of the milk, but not the whole. He lost his case. But the worst was to follow. His stomach began to manifest the natural effects of the outrage committed on it. It began to ache. He simply roared in agony. He had a relief in vomitings and free motions. For a number of days he lay on sick bed.

Only recently I heard of a professional *Prohit* who had to give his palate maximum enjoyment during the days of *Shradh*. He had the reputation of being the most gluttonous *Prohit* who could continually and repeatedly dine with a number of his followers during days of *Shradh*. He did not take count of his growing age. He could not bear to fall below his reputation. What a folly ! He could not realize that time and age leave their marks on human body. So once in a way he outdid even his previously acquired reputation because one of his followers had prepared special dainties for him. When he wanted to get up after he had satisfied his vanity by taking all that was placed before him, he could not do so. He was then placed on a cot and carried to his house. Next day, he died. He paid the highest penalty for his vanity. It is hardly to one's credit to be a glutton. But vanity finds gratification even in such useless or dangerous feats. The vain man wants to feel that he is at the top and all the rest beneath him. What a morbid food vanity subsists upon !

## VANITY IN THE DOMAIN OF MENTAL POWERS

TEACHER.—Let me deal with another aspect of vanity to-day. This refers to man's abnormal love of his self in the domain of mental powers.

A STUDENT.—This, I am sure, would be of great help to us. But please illustrate it with examples.

TEACHER.—I suppose you have heard the name of Cheiro.

A STUDENT.—Who has not, Sir, heard of that wizard seer.

TEACHER.—It comes in his life that once he was invited to America. He was lecturing in the Buffalo State. He was feted very enthusiastically. His generous host was all kindness to him. Fifteen days after his arrival there, he was surprised to see that those who had hung upon his lips began to give cold shoulder to him. Even his host grew distant. He could not understand this atmosphere of unwelcome. He asked the host to throw some light on this sudden change. The host took a promise from him that he would not press him to divulge the name of the slanderer and on that condition alone, he would reveal to him everything. Cheiro acceded to that and the host told him a strange tale. He said that a rich man of that place who moved in all higher circles, had given out that Cheiro owed all his education to him, that he had launched him on his career and that he (i.e., Cheiro) had repaid him with the highest ingratitude in stealing all his books on palmistry which had made him such an expert. He further said that Cheiro had stolen the affections of a wealthy heiress whom he married, and that after he had robbed her of all her money, he deserted her and that she was now lying on death-bed.

Cheiro was dumbfounded to hear all this slander. But what could he do? He did not know the slanderer whom he could confront and thus kill slander. He felt utterly helpless.

It was by an accident that he came to spot the slanderer.

One day he was invited by a gentleman who was interested in him and who asked him to come to him not under the name of Cheiro but his real name. He did so. He unbosomed himself to his host and asked his counsel in that terrible affair. While he was talking with him he heard some one repeating the same slander and saying, "Yes, I educated him in his career . . . ." Cheiro at once got up and went to him and asked, "Do you know Cheiro?" "Oh yes," he said, "he will think twice before he approaches me, for I will hand him over to the police." This was the burden of his utterance. Cheiro got indignant and told him that he himself was Cheiro and that if he (i.e., Cheiro) did not strangle him to death, he should take him to the police. The slanderer went into a swoon. When he came to himself, he admitted that because of his vanity he could not bear that anyone else should be considered better than himself in the knowledge of palmistry which was his hobby and hence he had invented a lie to raise his reputation at Cheiro's cost.

A STUDENT.—What a horrible man !

TEACHER.—Rather say how horrible is vanity ! That wealthy man had to eat humble pie. He put in writing that all that he had said against Cheiro was a black lie and he had to offer an unconditional apology to him. This is what vanity cost that vain man.

A STUDENT.—Why is it that a vain man is not able to see that it is not possible for him to maintain a lie that he is perfect when he is not, that his claim to mental superiority or position is not sound, when it is built only on sand ?

TEACHER.—Vanity robs a man of the ability to see truth about himself.

There was a struggling young man of poor ability—a mechanic—who succeeded in winning the love of a girl who was the only child of rich parents. When the girl's parents came to know of their girl's infatuation for him, they said to her, "Born and brought up as you are in the lap of luxury, you will not be able to live all your life with a man who has no chance of a big career and who is at present a pauper." The girl declined to listen to them. She left her parents' roof and went and married him. They say the school of experience is a costly school but a fool will learn in no other.

The mechanic was vain. He did not realize the fact that a

man of his ability had not much chance to climb high. On the contrary, he raved against his wife's parents being wealthy and ridiculed their superiority. But facts ultimately tell. This mechanic fell on hard times and it was difficult for him even to make both ends meet. The girl's mother used to see her. She was after all a mother. She lavished affections on her only child and brought things for her. The mechanic would quarrel with his wife for accepting gifts from her mother. "I don't want you to use anything which I am not able to provide for you" he said sulkily. His wife would say, "But my mother is my own mother. There is no disgrace in accepting things from her. Was I not brought up by them all my life before I married you?"

At last when month followed month and the mechanic had no job, his wife arranged to get him a job at a distant place in some concern financed by her father. A plan to get him accept the job was thus set. An advertisement inserted by her father anonymously was read by his wife to the mechanic. He applied. He got the job and also a fine cottage to live in. This plan worked for a year or two when somehow it came to the notice of the mechanic that he was serving his father-in-law. His vanity was offended. He returned home, resigned his post and took his wife back to his town. He began to rot. His two children fell seriously ill. The mechanic had nothing to secure medical help for them. The girl's parents came to his rescue. But he resented it. He could not bear to see that he was in any way inferior to his wife's parents when in fact he stood no comparison to them. Poisoned by vanity he got so perverted that he had to divorce his wife.

He married another girl who made his home a hell for him. He then one day came back to his divorced wife and said, "My vanity has ruined me. Had I been able to accept the facts, I would not have seen these days. I am living in a hell."

He was ultimately shot dead by this second wife.

How vanity proved an end of him!

A STUDENT.—In this case, Sir, the facts were quite patent that the mechanic was definitely inferior in earning capacity to his wife's father.

TEACHER—They were patent. But he could not bear to see that he was in reality inferior to his father-in-law and hence

declined to acknowledge that fact to himself. He always felt that he was really very great and only circumstances were against him. You see how vanity disables a man from seeing, believing or acknowledging facts and truths about his inferiority.

A STUDENT.—It is amazing—this blinding influence of vanity.

TEACHER.—There was a rich man who was a successful business-man. He had opened firms in many places. But he was not even a matriculate. One day he came to me and said, "You are an M.A., but I don't see how you are superior to me intellectually." I was taken aback by his audacity. Literary or philosophic attainments cannot be shown as concrete things like currency notes or gold sovereigns. However, a volume on metaphysics lay on my table. I said, "This is a book that I teach others. Please open any page and let me know what you understand." He took up the volume at once and began reading the contents. After about half an hour he said, "I am not able to make any head or tail of it." But he did not seem to realize that he was in anyway inferior to me even in the subject of which I had made special study in college and which I had been teaching for years. Vanity shuts a man in the dungeon of his little self where he does not receive a single ray of light of truth and where he worships himself all the time and all alone.

A STUDENT.—Sir, how does it affect us?

TEACHER.—This malady begins to grow in man and manifests from his very infancy. A son, when he is asked by his father to do what he does not like, or not to do what he likes, calls his father a fool.

It was a college student who reported how his vanity had almost ruined his career. He was in a college. His father used to keep strict watch on him since he had bitter personal experience how as a young man he had blasted his own life. But the son revolted against it calling his father an orthodox man and left his house, went and served some where. His utter inexperience led him into the trap of a fallen woman and he returned home a sadder but a wiser man. His college career was over and he had no job. But for his father's timely help, he would have been a beggar in the streets.

A STUDENT.—This is true, Sir.

TEACHER.—I give you a more difficult case. Please think over it and give me your opinion. A pauper boy comes to this college. He is not only enjoying all possible concessions but is maintained at the expense of the college and even gets all books free of charge. What should be the attitude of such a boy towards his Principal?

A STUDENT.—He should ever feel indebted and humble.

TEACHER.—Now just imagine, that during his days as a student when he is enjoying all these charities, he forgets them and even assumes the air of superiority and insolence. He considers his benefactors as beneath him. He wants to dictate and rule his benefactors. What would you think of him?

A STUDENT.—An insane person, no doubt.

TEACHER.—Yes, he was morally insane. His hostel friends flattered him that he was a genius and that he alone could represent their case to the Principal. Had he been an humble soul, he would not have been carried off his feet. But his vanity deluded him. Consequently, when he went before the Principal in that attitude and the latter reminded him of his real position and asked him as to what would be his lot, if his concessions were withdrawn, he was disillusioned. He actually felt the ground giving way under his feet. He then began to whine and pray that he was misled, that his hostel friends had blinded him and that he should be forgiven.

A STUDENT.—Sir, that is how he came to his senses.

TEACHER.—But he never became humble. Vanity does not die so easily. He had the sense to realize that his insolence was costing him food and education. It was the consciousness of this loss which brought him to his senses. But this was only a temporary relief. That a pauper dependent on charity should have lost sight of all sense of reality and that he should assume an attitude of equality or even superiority to his benefactor and his Principal, must be suffering from an abnormal illusion of vanity to go to such lengths.

But vanity has no limits to the ravages it works in the lives and destinies of men and women.

A STUDENT.—Sir, that a pauper dependent wholly on the charity of his benefactor should have assumed the airs of superiority and insolence to him is indeed sheer madness.

TEACHER.—I give you an historical instance of this kind of



vanity.

Dr. Johnson as a student was the brightest star of his institution. The boys worshipped him. This worship cost him his good sense

Once his father who was a petty bookseller fell ill. He asked his son, who was then schooling, to go and sell the books in a square where people congregated on festive occasions. The son, who was wholly dependent on his father, felt that by doing so he would look small in the eyes of his school-fellows whom he lorded over everyday. He did not go. He did not consequently obey his ailing and poor father. His father felt deeply pained and hurt.

Years after, when Dr. Johnson had become the acknowledged prince among the writers of his day, he remembered that incident, went to the square and shed tears at his conduct shown towards his father in his boyhood days. He realized how vanity had made him blind to his benefactor.

## VANITY IN THE DOMAIN OF MENTAL POWERS—2

TEACHER.—My boys, vanity is a dangerous soul-malady. Our poet Tulsidas called it the source of sinful life. It develops not only in a man who possesses some intellectual capacity, but even in him who possesses none.

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly illustrate these points ?

TEACHER.—By all means. During my professional career, I came across a Naib Tehsildar with second-class magisterial powers. He was no doubt an able man. He was one of the Indian magistrates who was punctual to his official duties. He was also very hardworking. Strange to say that in spite of all these qualifications, he never rose even to the position of a Tehsildar when men with comparatively lesser qualifications, retired as E.A.C.'s of the first grade.

A STUDENT.—What was the reason, Sir ?

TEACHER.—The reason was his vanity. Because he was able, he had contempt for others. Once he was working in the Deputy Commissioner's office and was in charge of its Judicial Section. He had the knowledge of the sections of law at his fingers' tips. Once the Deputy Commissioner was writing a judgment. In discussing a law point he was quoting a wrong section. This gentleman was standing by his chair. Had he been humble, he would have offered his suggestion in a graceful manner. But his vanity filled him with contempt for the lack of knowledge which the Deputy Commissioner showed. He blurted out, "Sir, you are quoting a wrong section. It does not at all apply." The tone of his subordinate came like a pistol shot on the heart of this European Deputy Commissioner. He said, "Babu, what do you say ? Do you mean to tell me that I am wrong ?" "You are wrong, Sir. I can show you the section." The Deputy Commissioner remained dumb for some time. He then rang the bell and called his Personal Assistant and told him, "See that this

Babu is transferred at once from this office." He also left a black mark on his record. Several other officers had the same experience of the Babu's vanity. We pleaders had the same experience. Nobody wanted even to talk to him—his vanity was so pinching. His highest salary was Rs. 60. He retired on a pension of Rs. 33 while his less able juniors retired on even Rs. 400.

A STUDENT.—Did not his personal experience of what vanity had done against him awaken him to its horror ?

TEACHER.—No. On the contrary he consoled his heart by saying that he was a martyr to his convictions. Vanity wrings out maximum satisfaction even out of a fall.

A STUDENT.—Sir, is it not natural for an able man to be vain?

TEACHER.—As it is not natural for a strong man to be unhealthy, so it is not natural for a truly able man to be vain. Socrates was the ablest man of his time. And yet looking at the infinite field of study which his reverential heart opened for him, he said, "I know that I do not know." Ability to get knowledge should be considered a privilege for gaining more and more knowledge and not a factor to feed vanity. Let more and more knowledge grow in us, but let more of reverence dwell in us. A seeker after knowledge cannot afford to be vain. He sees greater and greater vistas of study opening before him and making him more and more humble and reverential. When a man treats his ability as an ornament which he has to wear for self-glorification, he cannot but be vain.

A STUDENT.—Any other illustration, Sir ?

TEACHER.—Yes, as many as you like. There is another case of a man who was my neighbour. He as a *Patwari*. He was no doubt the ablest *Patwari*. In revenue matters he had no peer even among the highest district officials. He was, therefore, valued. All this developed his vanity. He took bribes fearlessly because he was conscious that in the first place nobody would be able to find out his clever dishonesty but even if anybody dared to do so he had enough ability to outwit him. Gradually his vanity made him unpopular. He could not realize that nobody was indispensable in this world. The world goes on even though the best philosophers and saints have passed away. His vanity lost him the power of gauging his own strength as

pitted against his growing unpopularity in the department. He, therefore, lived in fool's paradise. When a strong Deputy Commissioner came, he took up this man's case and before the vain man knew, the blow had fallen. Several cases of bribes-taking were marshalled against him. He was tried in court. But even after his fall his vanity was disgustingly apparent. He was convicted to perhaps three years' imprisonment and also a heavy fine. All his immediate officers were sorry for losing his valuable services. But they said, "What could we do when he grew intolerable. He would count nobody as anything. How long could all this be tolerated!"

Even when he came out of prison after having served his full term, he was stuck up as ever. Thus you see even experience does not, in many cases, open the eyes of a vain man.

A STUDENT.—Vanity indeed is a malady of the worst kind.

TEACHER.—I have seen most promising careers of students destroyed by vanity. I know of the case of a student who was quite brilliant. He failed in one house examination. His vanity was stung. He used very painful words against his very able Professor. He could not realize that he was not even a graduate and that his teacher was an M.A. with a brilliant University record and years of experience. His vanity made him a judge of his teacher's ability and it placed him first in his own estimation and his teacher next. Without his knowledge he was getting unpopular. He could not shine.

In the same way, vanity became the cause of the unmaking of a very brilliant student. He would consider his teachers beneath him. He could not continue his studies after Intermediate and in that class also he had to stay for four years.

Vanity, in the same way, blasted the promising career of a man who became an M.A. but who could not bear anyone finding fault with whatever he wrote. This attitude is very dangerous, for we have always somebody superior to us whose counsel we have to take. He fought shy of all superiors as he considered them not worth consultation. I am deeply sorry for him. As a writer he could have been of great service to others. But his vanity lost him that chance.

How unfortunate it is for a man who can climb high. but who is not able to do so unaided, to refuse to catch hold of a

sympathetic hand proffered to him for his good. Vanity compels him to refuse assistance and consequently meet an early doom of his future and yet he regrets not. To be able to invite criticism of friends is boon of life which humility confers on us and for our great good.

A STUDENT.—Sir, does a really inferior man also get vain ?

TEACHER.—Vanity drives an inferior person to have recourse to things which are undesirable. This is because the vain man wants to show himself what he is not.

There was a graduate son of a selfless man who had given up his job to serve honorarily in a reformist school. This young man was vain. If somebody asked him what his father was, he would not feel proud of his father's selfless service as an humble teacher but felt humiliated for that fact. He would, therefore, declare that he belonged to a family of persons who belonged to Imperial Civil Service. This lie was exploded several times, for not a single person of that entire family had ever got into Imperial Service. But repeated exposures did not bring him to his senses.

A STUDENT.—It is indeed sad how vanity makes one a fool.

TEACHER.—There was another man who was of a very mediocre ability but who was fond of being declared as a great writer. He could not show the ability which he did not possess. He, therefore, began to steal from the best writings of his illustrious father (whose roof he had renounced and joined his opponents), and he would send them as his own contributions and that also in the papers of his father's opponents. He enjoyed a short-lived reputation. Wrong carries within itself the seeds of exposure. His tactics were exposed. But he was too much hardened by vanity to learn by this exposure.

Lately, an M.A. was called upon to explain as to why he was publishing some articles as his own which were bodily taken from an old book not much known.

Vanity impels a man even to wear feathers not his own but stolen ones and thus look beautiful. But a crow which wears peacock's feathers can neither remain a crow nor become a peacock. He stands exposed as a vain braggart.

Vanity in an inferior person is a handle on which an agitator plays. An agitator works on two weaknesses of man—his avarice and his vanity. Many young men give up good careers

to join an agitator, go to prison, enjoy for a time cheap notoriety and then sink into oblivion from which they never rise. Youth is the time for education. That time is lost. It never comes back. And the sufferer is gone for ever.

I was one day travelling by a train when a passenger who looked smart and intelligent opened his heart to me. He said, "I belong to Bombay Presidency. I was lured during non-co-operation days to give up college education. I courted jail. I came out. The movement ceased. I was stranded. Now I am neither useful to the nation nor to myself. Bread earning is a problem with me." "But what was the appeal that went home to you?" I asked. "If you want a frank reply, then I can tell you that our vanity and inexperience were exploited. We were called the hope of the nation and we began to feel that India's destiny rested solely on us. It never occurred to any of us that with our education poor as it was, what could we do but serve as fodder for the cannon of our enemies. But there is none now to think of us." His words were pathetic as they came from his heart and they filled me with sadness. He said that there were lots of other young men who were similarly placed on the horns of a dilemma. "We cannot join any college now and we cannot expect any help from our leaders. We cannot beg and we cannot get service." Saying so, he relapsed into painful silence.

All agitators make an appeal mostly to the vanity of the students and make them do things which are sometimes most painful and undesirable. Vanity blinds a young man and therefore he falls straight away into the trap. Lots of young men are made to court prison. Some apologize and come out of it. Those who stay prisoners rarely court another prison-life at any cost. They seem to be given false values and false estimates of their power of sacrifice and endurance. As vanity is a rule and not an exception, the agitator thrives. When this agitator comes to power, he sees the horror of what would happen to him if some other agitator appealing to the self-same vanity of youths, leads them against him. He, therefore, preaches that the youths should take no active part in any political movement and must confine themselves to their studies. This was not the lesson he taught them when he was in opposition and was working as an agitator.

## DELUSIONS OF VANITY

TEACHER.—I am going to give you to-day still another danger of vanity. Vanity causes lot of delusions and makes a fool of its victims.

A STUDENT.—This would be an interesting subject for us. Will you kindly, as usual, illustrate it with examples.

TEACHER.—Yes. There was a Sikh gentleman who bore the same name as the Maharaja of a Sikh State. He was a youngman when his father died. Several parasites in the guise of friends surrounded him. They tickled his vanity. They said "Sardar Sahib, you have the largest estate and you have the same name as the Maharaja of. . . .State bears. In what way is he superior to you that he should be called a Maharaja while you should be called only a Sardar. From to-day you assume the title of Maharaja. We shall hold regular *Darbars*. Cases will be tried in your court. We shall have a regular court with a peon, a *Srishtedar* (Reader) and others." The vain Sardar fell into the trap. He began to call himself Maharaja. His parasite friends would hold regular court, summon accused persons, try the cases and get them punished. All this was a fake. The accused were bribed to play the part. Extravagant expenses needed to keep up the prestige of the Sardar as Maharaja, led him to mortgage his vast property. Not being able to pay off the loans he had to sell it. Within three or four years he was a pauper. The parasites vanished. He had no friend left. He had to go abegging and yet he would resent if any man called him Sardar. He insisted upon being called a Maharaja.

A STUDENT.—(Not being able to control his laughter)—But, Sir, was the man in his senses?

TEACHER.—Yes. He possessed normal senses. But vanity produced in him a delusion which made him live in a world of fancy.

A STUDENT.—He must be an illiterate man.

TEACHER.—There is no question of a literate man or an illiterate man here. It is entirely a question as to how far one is swayed by vanity.

There is a graduate alive who has done nothing constructive in life. He has not earned anything. But whenever he met me, he would say, "I have just come in contact with a man who is making me a partner. I tell you the business would bring me at least Rs. 100 a day as my share." I would look at him just to convince myself whether he was normal. He was normal. But his vanity always kept him full of fancies flattering his powers of earning money when in reality he did not earn a pie in any month. One day he told me, "I have to purchase an arable land. I am being offered a square for a song". I was an advocate then. I was well-versed with the conditions of land and knew most of the landlords. I told him that most of the landlords of the Tehsil he named were educated people and that there was no good land which could be sold for less than Rs. 200 an acre. To my surprise, he said, "I would get a square for a song." I let him go. I met him after some months. I asked him if he had got the square. He was silent. But for years he fed his vanity by claiming to be a genius in finding out new avenues for making money. He had the audacity to make suggestions to those who were far more able than him. They would humour his vanity for they took him for a deluded person.

A STUDENT.—It is surprising that a man who has all his life earned nothing has been all along claiming extraordinary capacity for earning.

TEACHER.—Such is the spell that vanity casts on man. I came across another case of a person deluded by vanity. His father occupied a post of great influence in a big city. As eldest son he naturally enjoyed the power that his father possessed. He was feted by all when he came to see his father. He could go to any shop and get what he wished. His father got that boy an agency. That agency had made many a man wealthy. But this young man was a novice in business. If he had realized this fact, he would have been saved. But he was flattered as a remarkable genius. He believed himself to be such a one. I met him one day when he claimed that he was making a pile. Only



two or three months after, I came to know that his business had failed. Instead of making a pile, he lost all liquid cash—several thousands—in that. In what an utter delusion his vanity must have flung him that he could not realize that he was all along losing, but, on the contrary, believed and declared that he was all along gaining.

I saw him months after he had closed down his business. He was none the wiser.

A STUDENT.—In this case delusion cost a vain man very heavily.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Let me also give you a very amusing incident.

There is a son of a gazetted officer who has been more than once convicted of a serious crime. Once he telegraphed from another station in the name of that person's closest relation to send some amount. When the addressee got the telegram, he felt at once that there was something wrong somewhere, for his relation could not wire to him for that amount. It was too paltry, looking to his position in life. He, therefore, telegraphed to him in return if the message was a genuine one. As was but expected, the relation showed utter ignorance of any such telegram sent by him. Both then set a trap to catch the offender. The amount was sent to the Post Office named by the criminal. The police was there. As soon as the bogus receiver claimed the money order under false pretences, the police arrested him and challaned him. He was convicted. He was thus a convict.

Somebody reminded him of his such base acts and said that he was a degraded man. He took offence at this and said "Don't you know I am a son of a gazetted officer!" "True," the man retorted, "but you are also a convict." "Convict or no convict," he said, "who can deny that I am a son of a gazetted officer." All burst into laughter. But he kept to his guns by claiming to be a superior person because he was a son of a gazetted officer.

I happened to be a guest at his relative's house when that relative sent for his car to have a drive. This vain man was to accompany us. I was surprised to see that while coming down the stairs he halted in the middle. I asked him, "Why are you not coming?" He said, "I have halted because I know that the

only seat open to me is the front seat with the driver. I feel an insult to sit with the driver." I said, "Let me go and sit there". So the deluded man came down and I said, "Come and exchange seat with me. But you should know that all of us are your elders in age. Why do you feel that you will be humiliated by sitting with the driver." He said, "You do not realize that I am after all a son of a gazetted officer. How can I sit with the driver?" I said, "My friend, is your father proud of you for the disgrace you have brought on his family?" "He may not be proud of me" he replied, "but I am justly proud to be a son of a gazetted officer."

You tell me how would you argue with such a monomaniac. This is how vanity keeps a soul deluded and thus makes him human denizen of a fool's paradise.

A STUDENT.—This example is very amusing.

TEACHER.—I can multiply such instances indefinitely. Once in my professional days I went to attend the court of a Tehsildar who was on tour in a village. Some body told me that some of my castemen lived in the village. I went to see one of them. He was a petty shop-keeper. During my conversation with him, I gathered that out of four brothers in the family only one was married. As there was paucity of girls in our caste, the other three were not able to get a girl from the caste. I suggested, "Why don't you marry from other castes?" The man's vanity was so much stung that he grew red hot and burst out, "If we agree, I can get the daughter of even the headman of the village who is the wealthiest Hindu in our village. But am I going to strike an iron nail into a pure gold-made big dish!" He meant by this that he would disgrace his caste by such a match. "But are you not in every way inferior to that headman?" I pointed out. "It may be true," he said, "he may be even a Raja. But am I not a Bhatia—a man of superior caste? Can anyone deny that superiority of mine?" I felt amused at his folly. I knew the headman. He was physically, intellectually, financially and in every other way his superior. But vanity of caste had warped this man's vision and made a fool of him.

A STUDENT.—This kind of delusion, Sir, has warped the vision of the largest majority of caste people.

TEACHER.—It has. Dr. Ambedkar is one of the most illus-

trious persons in India. He was lately Principal of the Law College, Bombay. When he was an officer in an Indian State, men of the so-called higher castes, who were much his inferior in office, would not tread on the office carpet because he touched it and would throw papers from above to avoid a touch. What a set of insane persons who though in every way his inferiors, falsely considered themselves as his superiors because they happened to have been born in some so-called one or another higher caste.

It was a sweeper who once brought a complaint to me that one of their female relations had embraced Islam and married a Muslim. "What is the harm?" I asked, "Is not a Muslim higher than you?" He gave a derisive laughter and said, "Sir, everybody is superior in his own caste. We are next to none. Her marriage with a Muslim has disgraced us."

A STUDENT.—Can such a perversion be true ?

TEACHER.—Yes. It is cent per cent true. You all have that delusion. This is called vanity of caste. I call it delusion caused by vanity.

A STUDENT.—Sir, who then is an inferior in caste ?

TEACHER.—It is very difficult to find out who is inferior. A Bania boy once told me that he would slap a Brahmin if he demanded the hand of his female relation in marriage. An Aggarwal pleader said that he would shoot his daughter if she married a Kshatriya. And yet we are solemnly informed that Brahmin forms the highest caste and next comes a Kshatriya. Vanity of caste creates certain specific delusions which make a fool of man.

Vanity is terrible. It feeds itself on trifles.

A Sikh lady once came to consult me about a probable good match for her daughter. I suggested to her some names. By the way, I also gave her the name of a Sikh who has no *kesha* (long hair). She at once said, "Don't talk of him. I cannot bear the idea of my daughter marrying a man with no long hair on his head. He cannot be a true Sikh. A Sikh is Khalsa or a pure one. To tell you the truth, I get nausea when I imagine a man without long hair as my son-in-law, for he falls away from the elect."

"But why?" I asked. She said solemnly, "I see no beauty, no attraction, no good even, in a man without long hair and

long beard." "But would you prefer an adulterer with long hair to a chaste boy without long hair?" I threw a feeler at her. I was amazed at her reply when she said, "What have I to do with his private life. That is the question between him and his God. But my one essential condition for a son-in-law is that he should be a Khalsa—one of the elect—and he should have long hair and beard. The rest does not matter."

How would you argue with such a woman! Look at the delusion caused by the vanity of her sectional feeling.

Largest majority of mankind is weltering in the mire of delusions caused by vanity. How foolish it is for men to claim that they can accept truth when they find it and eschew untruth. Man as a rule has lost that capacity.

## VANITY IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

TEACHER.—My boys, remember that vanity subsists on false values. When a person falsely believes himself to be unblemished and superior to others in any line and falsely believes others to be inferiors, he is vain. The inevitable consequence of all this is that he gets a perverted vision and loses the capacity for seeing and accepting truth.

A STUDENT.—Does not religion, Sir, provide an antidote against vanity ?

TEACHER.—As vanity lives on falsehood, the light of truth would alone prove an efficacious antidote against it.

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly explain it by means of illustration ?

TEACHER.—Yes. By all means.

One of my friends narrated to me his own experience. He was travelling with me by the same train. A talk began on the need of and loyalty to religion. One of the passengers, a pandit burst out. "There is no sin from adultery to any other moral corruption which I have not committed. But I can say with pride that I have never gone astray from my *Dharma*. I have been always loyal to it." Somebody asked him what he meant by *Dharma*. He said, "I have never taken food before taking bath and how many among you do so ?"

This is an instance of vanity attached to one's religious beliefs. Because of this one belief which he followed in practice, he thought himself to be perfect while he looked down upon all those who took food before bath, even though they were immeasurably higher than he in moral and other lines. In the world of religious beliefs also, vanity extracts its own food.

A STUDENT.—He seemed to have been insane.

TEACHER.—No. Normally he was quite sound but his vanity blinded him. For the one fact that he took meals after taking bath, he felt himself superior to all those who did not follow

this practice. He was not in a position to realize that his good practice was insignificant from moral point of view and that his life as an adulterer was the most immoral thing in him.

A STUDENT.—It is strange that one should grow so vain about beliefs or practices.

TEACHER.—This form of vanity is most rampant in mankind.

Once a father complained to me that his son was not performing *Sandhya* and so he would be ruined. I said, "But he is a very well-behaved boy and all are favourably impressed with his moral and helpful life." "He may be the most moral man," said the father "but so long as he does not have *Sandhya* twice a day, he is worthless. I am having my *Sandhya* twice a day." "But you take bribes, don't you?" I challenged him. "What has that to do with religion?" he indignantly remarked, "Our life in the economic and social fields has another code of conduct to follow. In religious world nothing pays so much as *Sandhya*."

As he was a man almost of my age, I carried on discussion with him. I said, "All religious observances should have only one object in view, i.e., to make our life morally trustworthy and useful for others. If any practice fails to achieve this object, it can have no moral or higher life value." "You are an atheist, friend," he said, "you cannot, therefore, realize the wonders of

Thus you see his vanity found relief in the fact that as an atheist I was necessarily his inferior and, therefore, my views necessarily were of no value. Here vanity found food in this man's partiality for *Sandhya* and gave him a sense of superiority over all others who did not practise *Sandhya*.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, why do they forget that as education is worthless if it does not evolve latent mental powers of man, so religious observances have no value unless they unfold higher or altruistic life in man.

TEACHER.—This truth would appear unpalatable to them as it would tend to destroy this kind of vanity in them. Hence they reject it and stick to what feeds their vanity.

There are persons who consider that religion consists in taking food with a silken *dhoti* on in a *chauka* seated on a wooden *chauki*. They follow this religiously. And they feel themselves

falsely superior to all those who dine at the table seated in chairs in full dress. They, therefore, feel contempt for them.

A STUDENT.—Does vanity necessarily create in a vain man contempt for others ?

TEACHER.—It does more. It makes a man most intolerant and even rude.

Once a Hindu missionary went to see a Charistian missionary about his own mission. He expected at least a courteous conduct from the Christian gentleman. But he was surprised when the Christian missionary abruptly asked him, "Do you believe in Christ as the Son of God." He said, "No." The Christian grew simply red hot and burst out, "Then your mission cannot but be a voice of Satan." The Hindu kept control over his temper and said, "Do you in this twentieth century believe that all those who don't have that sort of belief are not good men?" "They may or may not be good," he said, "but it is certain that they are ruled by Satan." "And do you believe that you are saved ?" he asked. "Certainly," thundered the Christian missionary. He then rudely asked him to walk out.

This is how belief in a dogma fed the vanity of a Christian who falsely believed himself to be superior to every non-Christian and falsely believed every non-Christian as his inferior and so he had to be treated with contempt.

A STUDENT.—Don't you think, Sir, that the Christian missionary may have been at least an honest man and not a hypocrite?

TEACHER.—Every vain man sincerely believes himself to be superior to others while in reality he is not. There is no question of sincerity or insincerity of belief. It is a question entirely of perversion of vision. Otherwise how could an eminent Muslim leader have proclaimed from the pulpit that he believed even a degraded Muslim *better* than Mahatma Gandhi. All this is utter blindness. It is not possible for any sane man of any faith to call a degraded man better than Mahatma Gandhi. This vanity is vanity of dogmas.

A STUDENT.—Sir, have you ever come across any personal experience of how this vanity blinds a vain man ?

TEACHER.—The Dev Samaj has got lot of experience of how

it has suffered at the hands of others because of their vanity of dogmas.

The most worshipful Founder of the Dev Samaj—Bhagwan Devatma—was considered and proclaimed as anything but good because he believed Nature to be the final reality. This vanity played strange tricks with our friends. When they found a number of followers of Devatma to be very good and trustworthy, their vanity could not accept defeat and acknowledge that its previous opinion was wrong. It whispered in the ears of its victims that it was due to sheer wisdom on Devatma's part that he could collect good men around him. When they were asked why they did not follow that good example, they felt bewildered. But vanity came to their aid and suggested to them to say that the Devatma was a marvellous orator and hence he attracted good men by the power of his tongue. When they were told to imitate him or acknowledge his superiority, they could do neither and yet they could not bare to admit to themselves that they were in anyway inferior. Vanity of dogmas has led thousands to revel in the song they sing of their own superiority while in reality they possess nothing. A challenge was thrown to them that if they were superior to Bhagwan Devatma they should base their society on the moral basis like that of Dev Samaj. No person in our society is admitted as a member unless he renounces eight specified sins. We asked them to do so. They felt chagrined and at last one sect of these theists laid down a proposition in their committee that they should admit only such persons who were free from two or three sins. The proposition failed. Another sect passed a resolution to admit only such persons who were free from five sins. It remained a dead letter. Having such a practical experience of their inability to imitate Bhagwan in such a high achievement, their vanity could not admit a defeat and it consoled them to say that as numbers increase in Dev Samaj, it would also dwindle to the rotten moral condition prevalent in their society. Vanity has offered them one consolation after another in their utter discomfiture but has not enabled them to face a shining truth that they are really inferior persons so far as soul forces are concerned.

A STUDENT.—How does, Sir, this vanity of dogma harm a man ?



TEACHER.—Any force that disables a man from accepting truth about himself and others is a degrading force of heart and so cannot but harm a man. Truth alone is the food of soul or higher life and not falsehood.

The pandit who took pride in the fact that he never took his meals before bath and considered himself superior to all others, even though he admitted that he had been guilty of all possible immoralities, was ruined so far as his inner character was concerned because of vanity. This is as much as to say that a man is quite healthy and sound because he takes bath, though he may be suffering from all kinds of diseases. As this is ridiculous, so is the above boast of the pandit ridiculous. A diseased soul cannot be morally healthy and spiritually sound when it is a prey to all kinds of vices, merely because he takes food after bath. For such a man the door of moral and real soul progress is closed. There can be no greater loss to any human soul than that he should be utterly blind to his inward condition and sink in the mire of immorality.

A STUDENT.—Vanity of dogmas, then, Sir, is the most fatal form of vanity, as it shuts the door against soul-knowledge and soul-progress.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Sometimes dogmas themselves create or feed vanity. Because *guru* worship had proved in the past in some cases harmful, some sects began to teach a dangerous dogma that worship of any *guru* or spiritual guide is objectionable. They went further and called such worship to be a form of slave mentality. "Man is enough light to himself," they preached. Some said, "Everybody could directly get light from his God." Now this teaching violated the Law of Nature. Man cannot do without guidance of a higher or better man. In army all have to obey a general because he is supposed to be the best guide. In politics all obey the leader. The leader of the majority party in a legislature is called Prime Minister. The leader of the unsuccessful party is called the leader of opposition. Again, heroes in every society are revered, loved and worshipped. This form of worship is called hero-worship. After their death, statues are raised in their honour. On occasions these statues are garlanded and deep reverence is shown to them. Wherever reverence exists, it leads the possessor to worship the revered object. To tell every man that he is a light unto himself

and that he needs guidance of none is to teach him an utter falsehood. When a man accepts from a higher person soul-guidance for his inner life, he becomes a disciple and his guide is called spiritual guide or *guru*. Man cannot escape this worship and if he accepts no guidance of some higher soul and follows the wake of his own low-loves and low-hates, he heads for a disaster.

A STUDENT.—How does this belief lead a man to vanity ?

TEACHER.—It gives him false value of his own superiority and false idea of the inferiority of others. When he falsely believes himself to be a light unto himself, he naturally believes himself to be a law unto himself and all others to be not worthy of guiding him. In such a mental state, he becomes lover of his impulses and ideas whatever they are and becomes self-willed and thus incapable of working in any organization. It is this form of vanity which has given to the world self-willed and arrogant persons.

A STUDENT.—How do they forget the plain truth that there are millions who are better educated, better informed, than they, and better experienced than they and better trusted than they ? Time, age, conditions and capacities lead one man to the top of a ladder and keep another at the lowest rung of it. When this difference is a fact, how can one be self-sufficient or how can one with safety refuse to accept guidance from those on higher rungs.

TEACHER.—This is what a vain man cannot see.

There is another form of vanity which is also highly dangerous. There was a man who came at the feet of his *guru* and considerably improved. One day his *guru* described in a meeting of the disciples the tale of his sufferings and the blessings he had brought for mankind. That disciple there and then went into a perverted state. "But he sings his own praises," he said. He could not realize that mother does not become vain when she assures her indifferent or ignorant child how much she loves him and how far she would go to help him. He took the mere statement of facts by his benefactor as self-praise. Again, he himself was not immune from the poison of self-praise. His vanity wanted all praise for himself and hence even when his own *guru* out of deep love for the good of mankind, mentioned the nature of boons he could confer on

humanity, he felt shocked and cut off his relation with his *guru*. His subsequent life was an eye-opener for others but not for him. His vanity never enabled him to see to what depths he had sunk by the inward urges of his low-loves and low-hates from which his *guru* had protected him.

A STUDENT.—It is a terrible weakness, Sir, not to be able to bear even right praise of another.

TEACHER.—Such is the weakness which vanity produces.

## HOW VANITY CAN BE FOUGHT

A STUDENT.—We thank you for having enlightened us on vanity and some of its forms. Are there still other forms of vanity?

TEACHER.—Yes. There are other forms also but we should be content for the present with these few forms.

A STUDENT.—Have no attempts been made by any man to get out of the insanity of this feeling?

TEACHER.—Yes, some men have at one time or another fought against it in one form or another.

There is the story of a Chief Minister of a Mohammedan king who was at one time a slave. It was due to the kindness and patronage of the king that he rose to that eminent position. It is said that when he was Prime Minister, some of his rivals went and reported to the king that at odd hours of the night, they had heard the Prime Minister talking with somebody in a room with doors closed. They had a reason, they said, to suspect that he was busy in some conspiracy against the king. The king seemed to believe them. So one night he went with the rivals to the Chief Minister's house when he was busy talking. The king knocked at the door and ordered him in the name of the king to open the door. The door was opened and the king was amazed to see his Prime Minister wearing the dress of a slave and all alone. "With whom were you talking and why are you dressed in such a shabby dress?" asked the king. "Your Majesty," said the Prime Minister, "I was a slave and it is due to Your Majesty's gracious kindness that I am holding the position next to you. I am afraid of getting vain. Hence I wear this dress to remind myself that I am no more than a slave. My present job is Your Majesty's grace. In this dress, I talk to my soul, not to forget my original position and not to forget Your Majesty's extreme kindness."

It is said that the king was deeply moved and his wrath

against the rivals of his Prime Minister was extreme.

In the same way, it is said of Dara, a Governor of one of the provinces of Persia, that he was born a shepherd. From that position he rose to the highest post of honour available to a subject, i.e., he became the Governor of one of the provinces. Whenever he went on tours, it was seen that one camel with a heavy box on its back was very religiously guarded. His enemies reported to the king that Dara was not honest to him. Of all the revenues he would keep the best part for himself and send the remnants to the imperial treasury. They said that if the king had any lingering doubts in the truth of what they said, he could come and see for himself how during his tour Dara had a treasure-box of his own always with himself kept on the back of the camel and well-guarded.

The king was anxious to verify the thing for himself. He, therefore, suddenly left his capital to pay a surprise visit to Dara when he was on tour. When he reached Dara's camp, he was shown by the enemies the well-guarded camel with a box on his back. The king asked his soldiers to take possession of that box. Dara was asked to open the box which had a heavy padlock. When the box was opened, it was found containing nothing but clothes and other paraphernalia of a shepherd. The king asked Dara to explain the mystery. He said, "Your Majesty, this box is my saviour. It contains all my things which I owned as a shepherd. They are permanent reminder to me as to what I was and that my present job is all due to Your Majesty's favour and grace to me. This is the only way to keep down my vanity"

The king was deeply moved and he there and then appointed him as Governor of one more province and heavily punished his detractors.

This is how some good men have fought their vanity.

A STUDENT.—This means that we have to remind ourselves repeatedly of our original position and the favours of those who have helped us to climb up.

TEACHER.—Yes. There was a great man who one day wrote a letter to his most revered father which I read. It moved me very considerably. He recounted therein the immense favours conferred on him by his parents. He wrote, "I was born utterly helpless, dumb and mute, unable to look after

my ordinary needs, unable to protect myself against any danger, etc.” This was the substance of his letter. He then wrote how the first step he learnt to take in walking was by the help of his parents. The first words that he learnt were taught to him by his parents. All education that he received was with their help, protection and love. That letter is worth reading in original. Who is there amongst you who has not received similar favours from his parents? And yet how vain children are even in relation to parents. If they grumble, it is against the wise counsels of their parents. If they get irritated and angry, it is when parents try to protect them from dangers due to their inexperience. If they are filled with feelings of bitterness, it is against parents because after nurturing them in every way they have given them an inheritance which they—the children—consider to be inadequate. In fact they make themselves a law unto themselves and consider their parents inferior. This is because they totally lose sight of their original helpless state from which they have been rescued by the love, service and countless sacrifices of the parents.

A STUDENT.—This is true. Vanity makes it very difficult for us even to see that our parents have served us.

TEACHER.—True. Once a graduate was asked by a worker of the Dev Samaj to remember if his parents had done any favours to him. He was sunk in thought and when he raised his head, he said, “Shrimanji, I have tried to recount the favours of my parents, but I feel that I have done them more favours than they have, at any time, done to me.”

A STUDENT.—This is absurd, Sir. Had the graduate lost his senses? Do we not see how our mother goes without sleep for a number of nights if we are ill, and how she changes the wet clothes of our baby brothers and sisters at night and herself lies on the wet side. I know how willingly our father suffers all kinds of difficulties and even humiliations to get us money for food, clothing, education, etc. The father wants nothing for himself but the barest clothes and meals. None of us can develop that attitude, make that sacrifice and shower that love.

TEACHER.—This is true. But vanity blinded the graduate utterly.

There is also another way to keep down the fumes of vanity. This is possible when one is able to remember one's

faults and sins which one has actually been guilty of. This is what I saw a good man doing. He was dictating to a man the story of how he had harmed others by his evil thoughts and evil deeds. A person is vain when he feels himself sinless. I gave you the story of a judge who had supreme contempt for all such judges who let some private feeling interfere with their judicial duties. Once he had a trial of his own life. His daughter had eloped with a man whom the judge did not know and married him. She was his only daughter. He doted on her. He felt lonely and sad when she ran away. One day a gentleman was challaned before him for murder. The case went on. The jurors said that he was not guilty. But the judge did not agree with them. He went home, wrote judgment sentencing the man to capital punishment. Before he went to the court, his runaway daughter came to him. His joy knew no bounds. And she then revealed to him that the accused gentleman was her husband and he had murdered the deceased because he had insulted her. She told him that if he passed capital sentence on him, she would commit suicide. There was a trial for him and he fell. He went and acquitted the accused. Thereafter he used always to say, "Oh, we human beings are weak. Every one of us has a weak spot." His vanity was given a very severe knock-down on its head.

In the same way, sense had come to those violent accusers of an adulteress whom they wanted to stone to death when Jesus Christ told them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone on her." At that time they realized that they were in the same boat.

I saw one day a proud husband standing in a very penitent and humble mood with tears in his eyes saying to his wife, "I remember how I brutally treated you when you had lost only Rs. 10. I have lost Rs. 50 to-day. Please chide me to your heart's content." The devoted wife was herself moved to tears. She simply said, "We are all weak, we have no right to chide one another for failings. We have to help each other." It was a heavenly sight. It moved all to tears. There is a great fragrance in humility. Lot of cruelty would cease to exist only if we were humble and conscious of our own failings.

A STUDENT.—We, all of us, Sir, have failings. We all of us, have at one time or other harmed others by our evil thoughts

and evil deeds. Why is it that we fail to see them and to grow humble ?

TEACHER.—Vanity is there to shut all doors against seeing our own foibles, faults or failings. We get no light (called spiritual or divine light) which might reveal to us not only the ugly nature of vanity but of all low-loves and low-hates.

A STUDENT.—Where can we get that light ?

TEACHER.—This light is generated in the soul of one who has developed in his blessed heart from his hereditary germ state, divine forces of complete and all-sided love for truth, complete and all-side love for goodness, complete and all-sided hatred for untruth or all that is antagonistic to truth, complete and all-sided hatred for wrong, evil or sinful life or whatever is antagonistic to goodness.

A STUDENT.—What is the nature of this light ?

TEACHER.—Its nature corresponds the divine forces from which it flows. Hence it reveals the beauty of truth and goodness and most reprehensible nature of falsehood and wrong. Hence when it enters the heart of a fit soul, he finds even the picture of sins committed years before as most ugly and he feels an urge to purify his heart of their impure effects. An insolent son sees the ugly picture of his insolence, weeps at it and apologizes to his father. An ungrateful man sees the ugly picture of his ingratitude, weeps and apologizes to his benefactor. A dishonest man sees the picture of dishonesties committed by him as most reprehensible and feels an urge to return the ill-gotten money amounting, sometimes, to thousands, to the defrauded owners. An adulterer sees the ugly picture of his disloyalty to his wedded partner and of the feeling of faithlessness produced by him in the woman he has seduced, weeps bitter tears and feels an urge not only to give up adultery but pass through several penitential exercises to get pure of the past impurities. A cruel husband weeps at his cruelty to his helpless wife and feels an urge to apologize to her. An officer sees the ugly picture of his persecution to his subordinate for difference of faith and feels an urge to soothe the afflicted man and makes some compensation to him. All these instances are examples from real life. This wonderful light reveals to a man the picture of his selfishness as most ugly and produces an urge in him to give his powers



and possessions for the good of others.

This revelation to him of the inward nature of man sobers him down. It subdues his vanity. It gradually gets the sting out of it. In some cases this unique light and this unique power cure a man of all his vanity and thus make his march on the path of higher life smooth. Blessings of higher life flow on him. He realizes that vanity is a fatal poison. He, therefore, tries his best to get completely out of its bondage. He knows and realizes that the gates of higher life open only for the humble.

A STUDENT.—This light indeed is wonderful !

## LOVE OF PRAISE

TEACHER.—My dear boys, there is a subject which bears close resemblance to vanity and which I want to deal with to-day. It is called love of praise.

A STUDENT.—Kindly define it.

TEACHER.—The love, that a man possesses for the happiness which he derives when he hears someone praising him or reads anything said in his praise by somebody, or when he indulges in self-praise by word of mouth or by pen, is called love of praise.

This love awakens in man as soon as he develops an awareness of his self as distinguished from others.

The happiness which a man derives when he or his beloved object is praised by others by word or by pen, is almost a universal weakness in man. It is not that a human soul derives happiness from true praise only. He feels happy even when he is flattered with false praise and feels unhappy even when his true defect is exposed. Here lies the terrible weakness of man. Lots of persons who spot this weakness in any man take the fullest advantage of it. They shower on the man suffering from this malady, even such praises as are all false. But he feels all the same a thrill of happiness and as a return for this service done to him, he goes even out of the way to help the false flatterer by all means—fair or foul. As opposed to this if his true defects are laid before him even privately, he gets violent and as a result of his unjust wrath he tries to harm the so-called detractor who in fact is his friend and benefactor.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly give us some illustrations ?

TEACHER.—Yes. There was a young boy hardly 12 or 13 years old. His mother constantly complained that he would not help her in her domestic work in any way. And yet this boy would go a long way to do errands or purchase things from the

market for a neighbouring woman. Hence if the mother complained that her son was good-for-nothing, the neighbouring woman would simply exhaust her adjectives in his praise for being so serviceable. An old woman who was present, smiled and said, "This is very easily understandable. You always praise the boy as you have nothing to risk even if the praise ruins the boy. The mother has large stakes in the destiny of her child. She cannot bear to see him go wrong. She has therefore, to rebuke him. The result is that he avoids coming to his mother who has to tell him the truth about his misdoings and runs to you because you do nothing but simply praise him."

The neighbouring lady did not appreciate this blunt truth. But it was a truth. This is how enemies of certain families bring about estrangement of their children by administering a dose of flattery.

A STUDENT.—Do such events happen ?

TEACHER.—Yes they happen every day. There was a student in my college who absented himself continually for a fortnight or so. I informed his brother of the fact. The brother felt unhappy. When the guilty boy denied the fact that he was absent, his brother gave him a swift and severe punishment. The boy naturally got estranged from his brother. A well-known enemy of the family chuckled at this. He arranged to see the guilty boy and poured encomiums on him saying that any family would have been proud to own him as a child. He added that having been provoked by his step-mother, his brother had personal grudge against him (the guilty boy). The boy fell headlong into the trap. He actually went and lived in the house of the enemy of his father. You can understand the feelings of the father and the elder brother of the boy. They were deeply hurt. The boy came to me to have my sympathy. I told him the plainest possible truth about his conduct. I expressed my deep sorrow at his conduct that he should have gone and found shelter under the roof of a man who was determined to destroy the peace and prosperity of his family. It was after a very long time that I succeeded in bringing him back to his father.

A STUDENT.—This was a reprehensible conduct of the boy.

TEACHER.—It is or it may be. But one thing is certain that low-love of praise exposes everyone of us to this danger.

I may tell you another case. There was a very promising

boy in my college. His father was rich and a gazetted officer. It was a very sad sight to see that this student was abnormally fond of praise. Several parasites—and every institution has a number of them—surrounded him. His monthly expenditure in this economical institution came to Rs. 150 a month. He would feed the parasites, take them to cinemas and shower presents on them. Besides this small group of parasites, he was morbidly anxious to have praise of others also who had no personal axe to grind and who pitied him for being a victim to parasites. Almost every week he would purchase something attractive. On Sundays under the pretext of getting his small cubicle thoroughly cleansed he would have all the furniture taken out. This furniture would remain open to the sight of all, along with a new addition. He would not let the furniture be taken in the room till he had a surfeit of praise from many mouths who sometimes honestly admired some of the costly and beautiful things of decoration he had purchased. He would gladly bear the trouble of keeping out of his room for the whole of Sunday in order to breathe in the atmosphere of praise. The college authorities warned his father. But the boy was beyond cure. He failed three times in the Intermediate examination and thus had to give up studies.

A STUDENT.—This is an extreme case, Sir.

TEACHER.—Extreme is reached only by those who walk that way. The above is the case of a boy who himself suffered. I give you another case of a parasite who trafficked on this weakness of the boys. He was a pauper and yet lived like a wealthy boy. He would worm into the confidence of the boys by ministering to this weakness of theirs and then live on their money and things. A victim of his in a moment of sanity told me that this parasite never brought his own ghee and he subsisted on his. "But why do you give him your ghee?" I asked. "Sir," he said, "he has the knack of influencing us by flattering us and we easily believe him and like to be with him." During the vacations he would be the invited guest of his victims and live a princely life with them. It is reported that his hold on a boy of a rich family was so great that he made him deposit a very substantial amount with a grocer. Then both would go and purchase things from him and all would be adjusted to the account of the victim. A rich shop-keeper told me that he him-

self was surprised to see every penny having been entered in the account of one boy. He asked the grocer why he did so and why he did not enter into the account of both of them when both had made their purchases individually. The grocer said that it was no concern of his as the man who had deposited the account at his shop desired him to do so.

A STUDENT.—Sir, did such a terrible student exist ?

TEACHER.—Yes. He is one of the parasites who are the product of the conditions that prevail. When boys love to be praised even falsely, these parasites will thrive. Sometimes they even blackmail.

A STUDENT.—How, Sir ?

TEACHER.—One day a father came to me and placed in my hands a letter sent to him by a student who was another parasite I came to know about. As I knew his character, I did not credit the lies which were written in that letter to slander the boy. I told the father that the letter was written to him by a boy who was himself one of the dirtiest boys. I at once sent for the parasite and the victim. The victim then revealed a sad tale. He was a vegetarian and an innocent youth. This parasite wanted to live on his money. He therefore won his confidence by profuse flattery and then in order to have lasting control over him introduced him into shops where the boy was influenced to take meat-diet and do such other things. The boy after some time recovered his poise and reviewed his fall. He became repentant and eschewed the society of the parasite. It was then that the parasite began to use threats against him of exposing the wrongs he had committed in his company. The boy became stern. It was then that the parasite wrote the above letter full of false things to his father.

This is also true that the influence of that parasite made the boy very indifferent to his studies so much so that he was compelled to give them up. A promising life was blasted.

A STUDENT.—This is very painful, Sir. Such facts should be advertised far and wide to sound a note of warning to innocent and inexperienced youths.

TEACHER.—I agree with you. But some boys suffer so hopelessly from this malady that all warnings fall flat. I came across a similar case which is painful. A parasite preyed upon a boy and because he (the parasite) bore ill-will to a member

of the staff, he flattered this victim that he alone had the power among all the students to set right that member of the staff. This boy actually believed that he was such a hero and came to grips with the staff member. As was expected he was heavily fined and had thus to eat humble pie. But in spite of this sad experience he again played into the hands of this parasite who used the same weapon of flattery. This boy suffered several times. He would wake up from his stupor and again fall into a relapse. This case pained me considerably. It is such boys that squander away big inheritance as a sacrifice at the altar of their love of praise.

Remember this, boys, that no student would dare to become insolent in the class or behave rudely or unmannerly or assume an air of braggadocio if he were sure that he would be universally condemned by students. If a boy behaves insolently it is because he knows that his such insolence would be applauded by the students as an act of heroism. Lover of praise as he is, he falls an easy prey to its satisfaction.

One boy was about to blast his career. He was the son of a pauper but inordinately fond of praise. He was led by one cunning boy, under the lure that he was a hero, to act insolently to the head of the institution. The head was a sympathetic man and he knew why the pauper had lost his head. He sent for him and said, "Boy, I am compelled to expel you from my college for your insolence." This took the wind out of his sails. He began to tremble and even burst into tears. The teacher said, "If your strength to receive the necessary consequences of your insolence was so poor why did you measure arms with me?" The boy admitted, "Sir, I was made a fool of by the students who flattered me and I lost my head. Kindly excuse me this time. I have learnt from this one instance where I stand. I am sure this bitter experience will save me in future from such mishaps."

Love of praise thus exposes a man to very great dangers. Sometimes it costs young boys even their lives. I will tell you about this next time.

## DANGERS OF LOVE OF PRAISE

TEACHER.—Yesterday I was dealing with the dangers to which a lover of praise is exposed. I deal today with further dangers to which young students are exposed.

A very serious case of a boy who was very handsome took place in an educational institution. As a corpse attracts vultures, so beauty of face and form exposes a boy to the attention of human vultures. Some of his fellow students were thus drawn towards him. They would write to him letters and poems full of flattery. They would keep offerings before him. They would pass hours at his house. This inexperienced boy deaf to the sage counsel of his very shrewd mother and the head of the institution, grew more and more fond of the incense of flattery.

One day, all of a sudden the boy disappeared. His shrewd mother scented danger. She went to college of her son and spotted a boy whom she suspected of some foul play. That boy was also a college student. Months rolled by and nothing was known. This case was about to get on the file of undiscovered and untraced cases, when some enemy of the family of that suspected college boy went and informed the police of the facts. The police made that college boy an approver and the gruesome tale was revealed. I need not mention the shocking details. All that I can tell you in the class is that he was brutally murdered by the approver's accomplice—an outsider—and the approver. He was murdered because he threatened to expose their criminal conduct towards him to the Principal of the college. Flattery led him to an early grave.

A STUDENT.—Why are not the students repeatedly warned against these dangers, Sir?

TEACHER.—Students have a right to question the teachers and the parents about this. But in this particular case warnings

were issued but they were ignored by the victim because it could never occur to him that there were human vultures moving about everywhere.

Less shocking than this, but not the less instructive is the example of a young student whose parents had died in his childhood leaving a large inheritance. He was under the guardianship of the court. He was fifteen years of age when some parasites surrounded him. They would always call him "Seth Sahib", or "Prince", or "Raja." This incense of flattery sent up fumes to his head and he became intoxicated. In order to maintain his position as "Seth", "Prince", or "Raja" and keep his parasites around him to feed his love of flattery, he wanted money. The court had fixed an allowance for him which was pronounced by his sycophants as too small for his little Highness. They, therefore, introduced him to a Shylock.

All these facts were revealed to me as an advocate, as I was engaged to protect him when the Shylock held Damocle's sword hanging on his head. This Shylock held *hundies* worth about Rs. 15,000. I asked the boy to confess to me how much money he had actually received. The boy then revealed to me the whole history of the transaction as to how he was flattered by his parasites and lured into the snare of the Shylock. He said he might have received Rs. 500 at the most. But out of even Rs. 500, the Shylock had by threats and blackmail taken at least Rs. 200, for once, he said, his gold watch, his gold ring, his purse were forcibly snatched by the Shylock. He suspected that the parasites had a hand in all that.

I called the Shylock and threatened him to come to terms or I would fearlessly expose his villainy. It was with a very great difficulty that he agreed to return all the *hundies* in his possession for Rs. 1,500, i.e. ten per cent of the face value of the *hundies*.

It is sad to say that even this experience did not make that young boy immune from the poison of flattery. In order to be considered fit to move in the so-called higher circles, he used to give sumptuous dinners and At Homes to big officials and others. In order to be praised as a generous rich man, he spent thousands on the marriage of his daughters. All this drove him to bankruptcy. Something was saved out of the wreck by a legal technicality. To-day he is a nobody.



A STUDENT.—Why does not a man learn even by experience, Sir ?

TEACHER.—As a slave of the low-love, man becomes helpless. In order to escape from the agony of non-satisfaction of that low-love, he finds relief in satisfying it and even courting disaster and death at its altar.

A STUDENT.—This is terrible ! What is needed most in life is a sound knowledge of the dangers of low-loves and a training in the ways of escape from them. And yet this department is altogether ignored.

TEACHER.—That is why the Dev Samaj has taken in hand this great task. It is sad that people in general do not appreciate it. Because of our novel religious views, they find satisfaction in persecuting us.

A STUDENT.—This is to be deplored. But many of us who have been listening to these lessons feel it a privilege of life that we joined this institution.

TEACHER.—Thanks for your appreciation. Let me continue this talk.

There is another danger to which love of praise exposes a man. I give you the sad tale of a student who was seduced to his permanent ruin by love of praise or flattery.

This boy was rich. An outsider—a parasite—wormed himself into his confidence by flattery. To his misfortune, the boy lived in a *kothi* hired by his father for his exclusive use. He considered it below the dignity of his family to keep him in a hostel. The boy was studying in a capital town—the headquarters of the Government. A parasite got round him and one day took him to a house which looked in every respect a private house. The parasite declared it to be his relative's house. The student met there a handsome girl who greeted him by placing garland of flowers round his neck and offering *paan* to him. She then regaled him with music and even dancing. The music was tuned for the occasion and every sentence of it was composed in praise of the boy. Though a good and innocent boy who had never gone wrong, he fell. After some days, he contracted venereal disease of the acutest kind. His parents had to remove him. He also lost his sanity for some time. I saw him later in broken health—an old man long before his years. He did at last learn a lesson but when it was too late. He

passed away at the age of 35 or 36.

A STUDENT.—It seems, Sir, that wealth, beauty, rich connections, etc., prove a snare for man.

TEACHER.—It is love of flattery, more than anything else which exposes an inexperienced and vanity-loving youth to the intrigues of human vultures. In their own homes, the students are rebuked for their wrong behaviour and they, therefore, compensate themselves by having an overdose of flattery. If nobody flatters them, they beg for flattery themselves.

A STUDENT.—How do they do so, Sir?

TEACHER.—When I was schooling, it was considered a sign of pride for a hostel boy to receive letters from his relatives. There was a student who used to feel small among his friends because his relations living outside the town used to write him very rarely. One day, this boy received two or three postcards. When the teacher called him into the class and gave him the postcards, he felt the highest satisfaction of his life. All unexpectedly his post began to swell. By a sheer accident the teacher looked searchingly at the cards and he found that all of them were written in one and the same hand. When he looked the postmark or seal he found that they were local. He then sent for the composition exercise copy of the boy. He was convinced that the boy had been writing all these postcards to himself.

The bubble burst. And the poor boy confessed that those students who received post were extolled in the hostel, and he used to feel small. He, therefore, had a recourse to that practice and so he began to be extolled more than any other boy. That supplied his starved soul with the food of flattery.

How amusing is this !

A STUDENT.—Indeed, it is so.

TEACHER.—It is, again, considered a point of honour for a college student to spend more at a tuck-shop. At Lahore I was guardian of a boy. He used to pay Rs. 25 a month to a tuckshop only. His parents did not grudge the expenses. But I was shocked to see that when the student got everything like milk, fruit, etc., at home, why did he go in for such a heavy expenditure. I then went to the shop-keeper. I had very close talk with him for half an hour. He said, "Sir, your ward in common with other rich boys is very fond of flattery. He is a stuck-up vain peacock. As soon as boys flatter him to be a

prince, he falls an easy prey. It is these flatterers, and not he, who take sweet dishes or milk, etc."

I thanked him for his frank admission. He said that such fools were the chief source of income to all shop-keepers especially tuck-shops.

One day, I heard a boy taking pride in the fact that he was spending a rupee a day in the tuck-shop. It could not be possible for that boy to take in things worth a rupee. He used to feed others. It is through such means that the starved souls feed their love of flattery.

I found, in my own school days, boys vying with one another in how much more they were spending at a tuck-shop. The boy who spent the maximum in a month was considered a hero. And the foolish student actually believed that he was a hero.

During my college days, I saw a student, who was fatherless and whose mother was poor, taking pride in the fact, that his new suit was worth Rs. 100. Some students gathered around him and showered flattering words on his affluent circumstances which enabled him to enjoy such a luxury. I knew already his financial circumstances and I was moved at that time with deep pity for his mother and expressed contempt for his love of show and praise.

In this college, a boy migrated from another college. I was told, that his cap was worth Rs. 10. His father groaned under his extravagance. In the class, I asked him what his cap was worth. He admitted that it was worth Rs. 10. The class roared with laughter as my boys knew how I looked down upon vain shows. The boy who thought he would get praise, was deeply disappointed when he was ridiculed. Never again did he indulge in such a vain show.

It was during those days that another boy who had also migrated to my college admitted how he had to keep unused his Indian-made shoes which had cost him about Rs. 12 and which he had purchased in the college, he had migrated from. He said, "I went in for such a heavy expenditure on my foot-wear, Sir, because in that college he was praised who came richly clad. When I came here, I felt ashamed of such a show because here everybody vied with one another in being simple. I have not dared use that foot-wear here!"

This is how boys respond to conditions. Those institutions which feed extravagant habits of boys by praising the most fashionable, bring about the moral ruin of students. And it is sad that even this simple truth does not dawn on mankind.

A STUDENT.—Love of praise indeed is most terrible.

TEACHER.—Let me close this with a tragic tale of how agitators exploit this weakness of students.

I had a student in the school where I was acting as the Headmaster. He was a very good budding poet. In the days of Non-co-operation movement, he sang a poem—his own composition—and all vernacular papers hailed him as *Qaumi Bachcha* (a child patriot). This incense of flattery entered his nostrils and he felt intoxicated. He did something foolish and it was serious. He got arrested and was transported for life. He went insane when he heard the judgment. He was given freedom when Martial Law prisoners were released. He learnt a lesson. Never thereafter did this dangerous poison of flattery lead him into such serious complication.

It is sad that youths do not realize that this love of flattery is heading their ship of life to the shoals and hidden dangerous rocks.

## LOVE OF PRAISE AND AGITATORS

TEACHER.—Dear boys, I have tried to make it clear as to how this weakness gives rise to parasites, who feed your love of flattery and thereby serve their nefarious objects. At the end of the last lesson I merely touched the point as to how the love of flattery exposes students to the baneful influences of political or other agitators.

A STUDENT.—Kindly deal a bit in detail with the last point.

TEACHER.—The agitator very seldom traffics in truth when he appeals to the youth or even the masses. His appeal is to the love of flattery present in young students. He begins by telling them that they are the hopes of their mother country and are expected to be the future leaders. Who does not know that we have hardly one in ten thousands in India who becomes a leader worth the name? And who does not know that while the students are in schools and colleges, their immature knowledge and unstable character unfits them for any job of responsibility. If led by the agitators they give up schools and colleges, they give up the only chance to receive higher education and knowledge which might qualify them for some serious work. When the students leave schools and colleges at the signal of the agitators, what happens? When the movement fails and the students are stranded, the agitator silently withdraws himself true to the adage, "Everyone for himself and devil take the hindmost."

A STUDENT.—Is it not, Sir, the duty of every student to be at the beck and call of his mother country.

TEACHER.—There is a terrible instance recorded in history as to how thousands of children and school-going youths responded to the call of a Christian agitator during the Crusades. The children formed themselves into soldiers for the Cross. They little imagined the dangers and risks because their

immature minds, and their want of experience unfitted them to take stock of the risks. The result was that all of them, perished doing no good while plunging thousands of homes into a vortex of agony and mourning.

The agitators praised them and patted them to the grave.

A STUDENT.—This is a terrible instance, Sir. Did it actually happen ?

TEACHER.—Yes. This is an historical fact. During Non-co-operation days, the leaders wanted all students to leave their institutions. Upon this, the editor of *The Modern Review* wrote some pages of notes in which he had warned the leaders against demanding the youths of the land to make that terrible sacrifice—a sacrifice which they themselves had not made. Almost all the leaders at the top were either distinguished graduates, barristers, etc., of foreign Universities or highly educated and cultured product of Indian Universities. Thus qualified, they possessed the capacity of supporting themselves and their families and understanding national and international problems and becoming the leaders of their people. Hence they should not have asked students to abandon the only avenues of the progress then open to them.

Hundreds and thousands of students left schools and colleges and if the facts were collected and recorded they would tell an equally tragic tale as the one of the children of the Crusades.

A STUDENT.—Have you, Sir, come across any such instance ?

TEACHER.—Yes. A number of them. Today there is a gentleman who is eking out his existence as an income-tax expert. He was a very promising student. He would have surely gone to foreign countries for higher education. He would have been the pride of his family and his country. But under the influence of the inflammatory speeches of the agitators, he left his college and wasted two years in the agitation. When the movement was withdrawn, he was left in a hopeless position. Either he was not taken back in his college or most probably he did not like to study again, as he felt it a humiliation to study with those who were far behind him. Anyhow his educational career was cut short and the hopes of a bright future were dashed to the ground.

There was another student who came to my college to be admitted. I offered him help. But after some days he came and said, "Life of do-nothing which was my lot after I left the first college has gone into my bones. I feel I will not be able to apply myself whole-heartedly to studies."

There is a gentleman who had to leave his home and become an exile, for, he had given up school education at the call of an agitator in his native place and knew how much he had thereby wounded his parents' feelings. I met him in another province where he used to live. He had to accept permanent exile.

I do not believe that at any time any such emergency ever arose as could justify such a sacrifice by the students.

Students should leave their studies only when a war of aggression breaks out against their country and the services of every man and woman, young or old, are required to defend it against an enemy that endangers the very existence of their country and threatens their own lives. For, if their very existence is threatened, education will not be of any use.

Our land was never in such a danger. Hence the call of any leader to boys to give up schools and colleges was a wrong call. And this call would lose all its efficacy if the leaders were to tell boys an honest truth.

A STUDENT.—What is an honest truth that an agitator should tell the students ?

TEACHER.—He should tell them that he is appealing to their love of praise and that by experience and age, they are unfit to see into his game and form any judgment of the consequences of their act, that he, the agitator, is not at all bound to arrange for their future education or even keep account of their sacrifices and stand by them ; and in case they suffer, he would not provide avenues for their maintenance or earning.

Let the agitator say these things and he would hardly have any following.

A STUDENT.—Is there any way open for us to withstand the temptation laid before us by agitators ?

TEACHER.—It is truth that kills falsehood. If every student were to realize the fact that the first duty that he owes to himself is that he should have education enough to advance in life and earn his livelihood, he would not so very easily give up

studies. He should also realize that as a dependant on his parents he should take their counsel in such a step since the step is fraught with positive danger. It is very unjust that parents should pay the piper and the agitator should call for the tune. The thing is that a student should avoid mob mentality.

A STUDENT.—How can we avoid it ?

TEACHER.—By keeping aloof when there is a mob hysteria called into play by an agitator. There was a student of my college who was carried off his feet by the mob hysteria here and broke the law. He was arrested and produced for trial before the court. He had not the stuff of a martyr as 99 per cent students donot have. I know how his father's friends and myself had to exert to get him out. He was weeping bitterly at his folly.

The appeal that is ordinarily made to a student is that he would become a hero, an observed of observers, one with whose name the world will resound, while the fact is that after a few days even a dog does not bark at or about him. But the agitator's one great weapon is to appeal to the boy's weakness for flattery and he succumbs to it.

A STUDENT.—Sir, is not every student who is prepared to risk his prospects, a martyr ?

TEACHER.—I have made experiments that if you take the boy out of the emotional hysteria of a mob and appeal to his reason, he rarely takes the insane step. His martyrdom would be clear to you from the fact that during civil disobedience movement I placed only one fact before my students. I told them that if they could bear to give up studies and go to jail and not repent, they were welcome to go and take part in the movement, otherwise they should not. This alternative placed before them in a calm atmosphere had only one effect which I had expected. Excepting for one or two boys, all the students kept aloof from the movement.

Then came a bolt from the blue which was not expected. Sardar Bhagat Singh was hanged. This produced an emotional earthquake in the student community. The boys were perturbed to an extent never seen by me before. They came in a mass to request me to close the college. I suggested to them to keep within the premises of the college and not to go out



and I would see that no classes were held. "But why, Sir?" they said. I told them frankly: "Dear boys, if you go out and get into the atmosphere of mob mentality, you may do acts for which you may have to repent for life." They agreed to stay in the college. I then took them to a big room and held a meeting. The boys made speeches and sang songs all in praise of Sardar Bhagat Singh and even wept profusely. They raised slogans. When they had thus spent up their sorrows I made an appeal to them in these words :

"Boys, now that you have given to Sardar Bhagat Singh the tribute of your love, sorrow and tears, give him another tribute. Place on my table whatever cash money you have in your pockets in his name so that it may be sent to the orphanage of our place."

Can you believe that not a single student contributed a single pie ?

I had not appealed to their love of flattery. I did not say that I would garland a man if he gave all he had. I did not tell them that their names would be advertised. Mine was simply an appeal to their noble instinct. The result was what I have told you,

A STUDENT.—This is surprising.

TEACHER.—It is not. I have seen the wife, the mother and the father of a student who went to jail and who were called in a public meeting, garlanded and made to say that they were blessed in so far that their son had made a sacrifice for his motherland, giving way to a bitter agony of heart when in their own home, cursing those who had lured their boy to jail. Public praise is the one weapon which is used to send the poor boys to their sad destiny. Reasoned appeal to them in a calm atmosphere would bring out the real facts to the surface.

There was a student who had joined Civil Disobedience movement. He had brought a Congress flag and wanted to enter my college and appeal to the students to leave the college for that day. I called him in and told him that he could appeal to my students and if after listening to his appeal they decided to stay he should, like an honourable man, withdraw. He agreed.

He then made an impassioned appeal to their love of flattery, to their love of the motherland, etc. When he had ex-

hausted his oration, I told my boys to go to their classes. Only one student joined him. I am, therefore, convinced that if the agitator were to give up his weapon of appealing to the love of praise in students and were only to appeal to their reason in a calm atmosphere, he would have no influence.

A STUDENT.—These facts are a revelation to us, Sir.

TEACHER.—But these are facts. One agitator grew angry with me and said, "Why don't you allow your students to attend our meetings." I told him calmly, "Sir, large majority of my students belong to this town and live with their parents. If they do not attend your meetings, it is not because I prohibit them but because they know all about you agitators. Go and speak to their parents."

Let every student only realize that an agitator loses nothing by the students' martyrdom, while the students and their parents lose everything and they would never let their sons fall into the trap of an agitator. It is this consciousness which would foil all attempts of agitators among the sensible class. Those that fall into their trap are either young students or ignorant masses.

## LOVE OF PRAISE AND MORAL PRINCIPLES

TEACHER.—In the last three lessons, I have confined myself to the harmful results that accrue from love of praise in the career of a student. But he has not always to remain in a school or college. He has to go out into greater world which is often not sympathetic. I will, therefore, deal with some instances of love of flattery or praise in the lives of grown-up persons.

A STUDENT.—Kindly do so. We believe that knowledge is power and to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

TEACHER.—Love of praise demoralizes a man.

A STUDENT.—How, Sir ?

TEACHER.—Let me go directly to the cases of real life. The president of a sect wants to marry. He does not believe in orthodox Sanatanist rites. And yet for the fear that he may lose the good opinion of his community people and get condemnation, he agrees to have his marriage celebrated by old and orthodox rites. He thus violates his life principle and sides with what he believes to be false. Has he not been demoralized ?

A STUDENT.—Yes, Sir, he has been demoralized.

TEACHER.—A gentleman following a new and reformed cult which discards all evil social customs and all revealed books and is deadly opposed to all orthodox rites, marries. As he has to marry in his caste and his caste men are orthodox people, he is not able to withstand their condemnation. His love for their good opinion breaks his nerve and he undergoes, like a bond slave, every form of orthodox rites. Is it not a demoralization ?

Again, a journalist of great repute declared himself as the follower of a theistic faith which believed and propagated book revelation. When I saw him on some business, he opened his

heart to me. He said to me. "My friend, I have got the highest respect for your *guru* because he had the courage to proclaim his convictions, even though the whole world stood to persecute him for that. Here, I am as confirmed an atheist as you are. But I cannot face the monster of public opinion which will condemn me as soon as I proclaim my honest belief. This is why I continue to declare my faith in God and revelation. I am too weak to face the opinion of my community."

This is typical of all such persons who are hungry for popularity or praise of people. They have no scruples and no moral courage. They are prepared to be hypocrites if they can earn the praise of their fellow-men

Is this not demoralization ?

A STUDENT.—It is a shameful conduct.

TEACHER.—There are thousands of persons following one or other sect who have ceased to have any faith in the teachings of that sect and yet they would declare themselves staunch followers of that sect because they are too weak to stand the condemnation of people for whose good opinion they are simply hungry. Once I was returning from Bombay when a young man who was well-dressed entered the compartment. I came to know after some time that he was an advocate and the proprietor of a well-known publishing house. After some hours, he came and entered into conversation with me. He asked me as to who I was. I told him that I was a worker of the Dev Samaj. He had heard about Dev Samaj. He said, "Is it true that you don't believe in God?" I said, "Yes." He then became very intimate and revealed his mind. He said, "I have been for the last ten years an atheist. I feel that I should declare my honest belief to others. But I am surrounded by those who suppress my spirits. Much as I wish to tell them what I believe, I get nervous when I realize how I would be hooted down. Now they respect me and praise me. I consider their praise as a mark of popularity. I have enjoyed this popularity for years. In order to retain it I even become hypocrite. I advocate their faith when I know that I am proving untrue to myself. But what can I do ? If I say the truth, they will raise slogans against me. I cannot bear that."

I was sorry for him. I told him, "How would you get more light when you drive out that which you have got. It is men

like you who are more dangerous than honest believers. I wish you could realize how much you lose in character when you knowingly side with untruth."

He was silent.

A STUDENT.—This aspect of the love of praise is horrible. This is tantamount to laying one's soul or higher character as a sacrifice to the monster of public opinion, popularity or praise.

TEACHER.—A High Court Judge who had all his life stood for widow remarriage, lost his first wife. It was the time for him to translate his convictions into practice. And yet to the horror of all reformers, he agreed to marry a young virgin. This gave a great set-back to the reform movement. The poor widows' cause was deserted by a High Court Judge. From whom could a poor widow expect justice ?

All this happened because the monster of praise wanted the High Court Judge to make this great sacrifice of his life-long principles.

You can see how love of praise robs a man of moral courage. If moral courage is lost nothing else remains in a man to be proud of.

A STUDENT.—Indeed, Sir.

TEACHER.—This love of praise sometimes claims still great sacrifices.

A distinguished M.A. of an Indian University and Professor came to hold reformist views. He stood for the marriage of a girl after she was at least sixteen. And yet when his own girl grew up, she was married at or before the age of fourteen. Being himself a vegetarian and a great preacher of it, he married her to a known meat-eater. When his friends asked him why he deserted his life-principles and even risked the future of his daughter, he said, "I cannot stand against public opinion. I cannot bear being talked ill of."

And it was at the altar of his self-praise that he sacrificed the good of his own daughter when he knew that her marriage would be consummated at once and his daughter being immature would suffer greatly.

He lost moral courage to such an extent that he could not even serve the best interests of his daughter. Is this not a painful demoralization ?

A STUDENT.—It is so, Sir.

TEACHER.—A very strange case took place in one place. There was the Headmaster of a vernacular school who belonged to a caste which was addicted to meat-eating. They celebrated no great festivals without serving guests with meat-diet. He came under the influence of a great man who was a strict vegetarian and he gave up meat-diet. As he was generally living out of his Tehsil, for he was employed in another Tehsil, he could easily continue to remain vegetarian. After three or four years, he had to attend a marriage in his caste. There was caste dinner held on the occasion. All had to sit together to dine at one and the same place. Meat-diet was served to all. It was also served to him. He did not have the courage to tell the server to remove that dish. He felt that his caste men would withdraw their good opinion and would look down upon him. He, therefore, quietly, took the meat served to him. Thereafter, he even wept bitter tears and wrote to his benefactor how sad he felt. He repented very much. But his weakness of the love of false praise brought about his fall.

A STUDENT.—The man seems to have no nerve. Was he spineless ?

TEACHER.—Do not judge harshly. Most of you would share the same fate where your weaknesses are involved. Remember the words of one of the founders of a well-known religious system who had said, "Oh, God, put me not to temptation." Or "Let this bitter cup fall from my hand." It is our weaknesses which expose us to temptations and falls. Every human being has one or more weaknesses. May he never have a temptation to fall !

I give you two more instances of how even highly educated persons fail to face the loss of good opinion or condemnation from those whose word of praise they value.

There was a distinguished M.A. who was engaged in the education department. He was posted at Bombay. In Bombay women are respected. There is practically no *purdah*. Hence this gentleman was found going about with his wife who used to wear *sari* and observed no *purdah* there. But she belonged to a *purdah*-ridden caste and town. Hence whenever she came to her town even with her husband she would, a few hours

before the train arrived at the station where she was to alight, put on a nose ring and the provincial dress and cover her face. Her husband who knew the folly of that change could not bear being pointed at if he took his wife in *sari* and with uncovered face. They who knew how at Bombay his wife observed no *pardah* and went with her husband for long walks, ridiculed this act. But neither he nor his wife had the courage to risk the praise of their caste men. They earned their praise because they yielded to caste demands.

There was another M.A. who confessed that he was very anxious to take his wife out for a walk just for the sake of her health. But he could not do so because his caste men frowned at such an innovation. When he saw some ordinary school teachers connected with the Dev Samaj taking every evening their wives for walks, he would feel envious. But he had not the courage to translate his yearnings into action.

Thus you can see that this low-love of praise robs a man even of a chance to follow some thing positively good.

A STUDENT.—Sir, we had no idea that low-love of praise was such a dangerous love.

TEACHER.—It is very dangerous, as every low-love is. It is the common characteristic of every low-love that it leads a man towards untruth or falsehood and even to positively evil acts. Any course of conduct which takes a man to falsehood and evil, degrades him and vitiates that most essential and most important power in his soul which is called its constructive power. It is sad that the educated and the uneducated alike do not and cannot realize that the entire existence of man depends upon this constructive power. This power increases by the evolution of altruistic forces and decreases by the predominance of low-loves and low-hates in man. So long as a man does not awaken to this great truth, he will not feel the horror of low-hates and the supreme need of the higher and altruistic forces. It is my fervent wish that children of man may develop this consciousness. It is then that they will be able to realize all such persons as benefactors who help them towards freedom from low-loves and who assist them in the evolution of noble feelings.

## LOVE OF PRAISE AND BENEFACTORS

TEACHER.—My dear boys, I have shown you in my last lesson how love of praise demoralizes a man. It proves him false to the convictions of his own life. It proves him false even to the great cause with which his name is associated. It proves him false even to the welfare of his dearest and nearest ones. It robs a man of his moral courage.

There is another danger to which a slave of this low-love is exposed. He becomes an enemy of one who tells him a frank truth about his defects as it offends against his love of praise. He falls an easy prey to one who declares him blameless and panders to his low-love of praise. Thus he begins to consider his real friends to be foes and his true foes as his friends. It is this knowledge which robs a man of the courage to tell even his son or one indebted to him of his defects or dangers.

A STUDENT.—This is very horrible, Sir.

TEACHER.—Indeed it is so. I cannot forget the instance of a young man who came to me in the hour of his great trouble. I fought battles for him and rescued his property from the hands of those who were either vultures or persons not inclined to give up their claims, false though they were. I knew this man's weakness. He was fond of being considered a *Seth*. I warned him against it. But he would not listen. Those who scented this weak spot in his character surrounded him. I knew their antecedents and character about which I acquainted him. The result was that he avoided me. They led him into the paths fraught with danger. They taught him to drink, to take flesh, to smoke and even to commit adultery. I approached his wife, his mother, his other benefactors. All my attempts to save him made him my enemy, till at last, I had no courage left to tell him a blunt truth that he was heading for a disaster. As feared and anticipated by me, he went headlong into an



abyss from which he never came out.

A STUDENT.—I consider this aspect of low-love of praise to be the most dangerous. If we get so perverted as to consider true friends as enemies and enemies as true friends, our life is doomed.

TEACHER.—It is surely doomed. If a person were to get conscious of this and observe all round the victims of this low-love, they would find the world strewn with the bones of devastated lives.

One day I received a message from a rich man that I should help him out of a difficulty. I asked the messenger what was the *Seth's* difficulty. He said, "Sir, his son is studying in your college. He goes to cinema every day. The father considers this as harmful for the boy." "It is harmful." I said, "but why does he not stop his son from going there daily." The messenger said, "It is here, Sir, that the difficulty lies. The *Seth* cannot dare to tell his boy a frank truth that it is harmful for him to go daily to cinema. He knows that if he told him that, the boy would turn to be his enemy." How unfortunate it is for a son that his father should be afraid to warn him against the danger. I had, therefore, to go to his help. I called the boy and explained to him the dangers of daily going to cinema. He stopped going even once a week. But his wrath against his father was none-the-less roused. He felt that his father had disgraced him in my eyes. His low-love of praise was mortally wounded. Hence the low-hate.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, if even our fathers cannot tell us an unpleasant truth who else would!

TEACHER.—A lover of praise does not want truth. He wants praise. If you deny him this praise, he gets outraged.

A STUDENT.—This is very sad, Sir.

TEACHER.—Indeed it is so. But this is a moral danger to which the low-love of praise exposes a man.

One day, a big stalwart 6 ft. tall Sardar entered my room. When he took his seat, he introduced himself as the father of a boy of my college. The son was also equally tall and strong. He said, "Sir, I have come to make a request to you. My son sends for Rs. 75 or 80 every month for his expenses. I am told that in this college one can live very well with Rs.30 a month." "That is true". I said, "but why do you send that amount to

your son ?" "I send the amount to him," he said, "because I am afraid of displeasing him." "Can I call him in your presence," I said, "and tell him not to do so in future ?" "No, please don't do so," he said, "he will never forgive me if he comes to know that I have talked against him to you".

Now, you can realize how a son can improve if his father trembles at the thought of incurring his son's displeasure. The son was pleased with his father so long as he did not offend his low-love. If he offended it, he feared the son would show him the other side of his temper which he dared not to rouse.

I had, however, a talk with the boy indirectly. He said, "Sir, our land is ancestral. I have as much right to spend as my father. If he is not himself economical in his ways of life, why should I deny myself the pleasures of life." I said "My dear boy, if both of you vie with each other in how much more the other spends, your land would slip out of your fingers." But I knew my words had not much effect. This boy was fond of show. His father's life set no good example for him. He therefore ruthlessly spent money at tuck shop just to entertain his sycophant friends and live on the incense of flattery.

In another case a complaint of a similar kind was made to me. It was about a Mohammedan boy. His relations came and saw me. They said that the boy was no doubt rich, but he was spending nearly a hundred rupees per month. This boy had hired a good house all alone for himself and lived more the life of a landlord than a student. To have praises poured on him for being rich, he fed and sustained some sycophants. I called him, as in the above case, in the absence of his relations who said that they dared not tell the boy to his face that he was going the way of a devil. When I explained the matter to him, he felt deeply upset. He knew that his relatives had complained to me. He could not bear that any body should talk ill of him, when in fact they had simply stated the facts. No one is disgraced by truth. People are disgraced by living wrong life. But this is what the boy never understood. He had, however, to apply some brake to his lavish expenditure. But he did not seem to forgive his relatives.

A STUDENT—The more I hear of this, the more pained I feel. Low-love of praise robs us of the benefit arising out of

the sage councils of our far more experienced benefactors. In this way chances get minimized of our being forewarned about our faults.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. It is not only boys who suffer from these maladies. The girls, too, suffer from them. When the girls are receiving higher education, the mothers feel the same hesitation in telling a bitter truth to their daughters for their benefit.

Once a respectable widowed lady met me. She said, "My daughter has joined the Dev Samaj Girls' College. She is a good girl no doubt. But she would not help me at all in my domestic work. Even when she is not busy with studies, she would sit away her time but not budge an inch to extend her helping hand to me. In your atmosphere alone I expect a change in her. Could you please help me?" I said, "Why don't you tell her yourself." "I cannot," she said, "as she would simply howl at me." Such is the helplessness which rules even a mother's heart in these matters. I had to indirectly explain to the girl her position and influence her to be of service to her family people. But how sad it is that a mother should not be able to help her daughter because the latter is not willing to hear anything but praise from all.

A STUDENT.—Sir, it is but inevitable that in certain cases the slaves to low-love of praise would never forgive any body, if he tells them an unpleasant truth which offends against their low-love.

TEACHER.—I had once a bitter experience. I came to possess some correspondence of a boy and a girl which they carried on without the knowledge of their parents. I knew both families. I knew that the father would not at any cost agree to their marriage. I placed this correspondence in the hands of the father of the girl. He was a wise man. He thanked me. But it was strange that he asked me to inform the mother of the girl. He himself did not and would not open the matter with his wife. I had to do the unpleasant duty. I knew that so far as the girl was concerned it was her inexperience and love of praise which had led her into correspondence with the boy. She meant nothing serious. She felt as if she was writing to a brother. The boy knew what he was driving at. However, I was shocked to see that both the mother and the daughter grew

violent on knowing that I had informed the father. "You have without a cause disgraced my girl in the eyes of her father," the mother said. The girl was still more violent. She said, "But who made you the judge of our conduct? Why don't you confine yourself to your own work? Why do you meddle yourself with the matters of others?" The father overheard all this. He then rebuked them both. He said, "Don't rave at a benefactor. He has saved the family. I am ashamed of your conduct." For a very long time, the mother and the girl did not forgive me because I had informed the father of the family the real state of things. A slave to low-love of praise cannot bear any complaint being made even to his nearest guardians. What a misfortune! And can there be a greater misfortune for a man than this that even a real friend should not be permitted to help him out of danger merely because that he offends his love of praise!

A STUDENT.—It is indeed a great misfortune for man that he should lose all chances of help from his well-wishers.

TEACHER.—There are some insane slaves to low-love of praise who become vindictive against a real benefactor and are not content with merely hating him but want him to suffer in one way or another.

I have personal experience of such persons. I had once told some unruly students that they should not expect to be admitted into the institution, after they had passed or failed in the next University test. I never meant to harm them. But I merely told them that I would not be able to pull on with them. I had also informed their parents accordingly. This offended against their low-love of praise. They grew vindictive. They troubled me in many and various ways. For months and months together, they continued their evil game to harm me and harm the institution. Some persons are very wicked.

There are some boys and girls or men and women who put an end to their own lives because their parents or guardians had the courage to tell them a blunt truth. There was a boy who had gone wrong in evil society. His father out of sympathy had to warn him against the danger and to rebuke him. He went up the highest storey, jumped from there and died instantly. This happened years ago. In the year 1918 or 1919 a young girl of my town committed suicide in Bombay because

her husband had offended her low-love of praise. Another girl threw kerosine oil over her body and burnt herself to ashes because her low-love of praise was offended. Only recently a young married man of 22 jumped into a well and died, because his father rebuked him for abusing a workman.

This is the reason why parents and guardians as a rule, cannot muster up courage to tell their children an unpleasant truth, because they are afraid to rouse their anger, hatred or vindictiveness.

A STUDENT.—Sir, it is now clear to me, why our benefactors do not tell us the truth which offends against our low-love of praise.

TEACHER.—It is not only difficult to tell a man his own defect, but it is also difficult to tell him the defect of one in whom he is interested.

There was a student who was really one of the worst students that it had been my lot in life to meet. I wrote letters to his father complaining about his son. Instead of realizing my difficulty the father of the boy seemed to have got angry with me. I came to know of his changed attitude when he openly spoke against the college.

In fact, everyone wishes to be told that he is blameless and all those in whom he is interested are blameless. He gets into a temper if he is informed of his own defect or a defect of one in whom he is interested.

How can defects be remedied if mankind is not in a mood to be told what they are and how the defects are to be removed. This is why mankind sits tight over defects and hence life of sins, crimes and blemishes continues.

## LOVE OF PRAISE AND SLANDERS

A STUDENT.—There is one question, Sir, which is agitating my mind. It is true, love of praise demoralizes man. But suppose, a man slanders us, should we not protect ourselves against it by showing our just indignation and setting the slanderer right ? Is not such an indignation a righteous indignation ?

TEACHER.—It is just and righteous. As love of praise is harmful in certain ways, in the same way, inability or disinclination to protect ourselves against false aspersions or slander is harmful. To pocket a false charge is neither good for man himself, nor for the slanderer, nor for the world. When any person shows weakness in this respect, it is not unoften that we find low-love of praise responsible for it.

A STUDENT.—How, Sir ?

TEACHER.—One day, I went to see the Additional District Magistrate. He said in a tone of deep pain and contempt, "Look here, friend, a bad character troubles the daughter of a respectable man. The father is asked to put the case in court. But he would not. How can Government machinery help anybody if he himself avoids it ?" I had then to say, "Let them suffer".

I once went to some station where a very sad case had happened. Two so-called respectable young men made a criminal assault on a virgin girl on a public road. They were immediately arrested by a strong police officer. He was anxious to prosecute the young men to give a lesson to them as well as to others who were similarly inclined. This police officer's astonishment knew no bounds when a deputation of about two dozen persons headed by the President of the Municipal Committee waited upon him with a request to drop the matter. They assured him that thereby he would be serving the best

interests of the girl. The girl's guardian also made a similar request. He told the police officer that if the case went to court, his daughter would lose all chances of a decent marriage. The police officer grew indignant with them. He said, "If this is how you gentlemen are to behave, crime in this relation is bound to flourish. Every bad character knows this weakness of you people. Instead of standing by justice against such a grave crime, you are thinking of your wrong notion of false praise. If they whose good opinion you hunger after, are such fools that they would not let a bad character meet his just punishment and give him a free hand in mischief, but condemn those who get the bad character in jail, you should not care a fig for their opinion." But all this sage counsel fell flat on them and the case was dropped.

"How can we help you, gentlemen," he wound up, "if you sacrifice justice for love of praise or so-called good opinion of your community?"

A STUDENT.—Sir, does love of praise, work here also?

TEACHER.—What else works then! The guardian of the girl was anxious to have good opinion of his community. He sacrificed justice for that. If the world is going to withhold its good opinion from me because I stand by honour, justice and truth, I should not at all care for them, if I am not a slave to their opinion.

A STUDENT.—Is it not true, Sir, that the girl's honour would have suffered?

TEACHER.—My dear boys, how was her honour glorified when she was criminally assaulted? How did it become glorified when she pocketed the gravest insult? On the contrary the bad characters in the guise of respectable youths made an assault on her honour. In order to protect her honour, she should have either punished them herself or moved the Government machinery to help her to punish the enemies of her honour. One's honour is never glorified by being afraid of those who are enemies of his honour or by compromising with them on terms of *peace without honour* or hanging down his face in their presence as if the victim is to be blamed etc., etc.

A STUDENT.—How could she have vindicated her honour?

TEACHER.—The best way for her was to give them a sound punishment herself. One day a girl came to my residential

quarters in an excited condition and said, "Father, there is a young man—a student—who behaved with me disgracefully. I took up my shoes and gave him a beating. Men gathered and I was helped. I hope I have done well. Will you stand by me?"

"Certainly," I said. "You are a good girl. Bullies flourish because cowards exist. Upto now the young men who have never learnt to respect womanhood, consider a girl as an object of their prey. This is because girls not only do not resent but try to hush up the matter as if they themselves were guilty. I am thankful to you for setting a good example."

In *The Tribune* of Lahore, I have read some cases in which girls and women have whipped or shoed the impertinent rogues. The best way to stop such wrongs against woman is to punish the delinquent then and there. But if you don't, the delinquent grows bold. There was an incident recorded by a pleader how a girl rushed into his compound saying, "save me." The pleader rushed out. He saw two bad characters in the guise of students running away on their bicycles. She told him how on the Mall Road they began harrassing her, by approaching her (she was also on her bike) or coming in front of her or following her. It was in sheer desperation that she made a drive for his bungalow. If the girl had got down and challenged them, these cowards would have run away. But she felt that by trying to save her honour by a bold stand, she would lose respect in the eyes of her people. She preferred good opinion of low men to her honour.

The coward indeed is a scourage of mankind.

A STUDENT.—What was the other way of vindicating her honour?

TEACHER.—By boldly prosecuting them in a court of law.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, the accused sometimes put very inconvenient questions or even allege compromising attitude.

TEACHER.—When you enter war, you should never be afraid of scathes or scars that you may get in the battle. In order to win a victory, one should be prepared to pay full price. But the victory is worth the fight. Any oppressed person who stands up to vindicate his honour and get the criminal punished, serves the cause of humanity. The cause of the world is best served by those who stand by honour, justice and truth. If we sacrifice them for any lower personal consideration, we prove traitors to



higher principles of life which form the foundation of good society. Humanity is not lost to all sense of chivalry. Thousands would stand by an oppressed girl.

A STUDENT.—I now believe this, Sir. A soldier who is in the thick of a battle, must get scars. But they are scars of honour. In the same way, every soldier of justice, honour and truth, will have to bear scars. But all these scars would be in fact scars of honour.

TEACHER.—A brave soul who stands for honour, justice and truth, helps the world.

There was a girl who was being harrassed by a bad character. She was at first a student and then became a teachress. This harrassment continued for over two years. The girl was teased out of life. She and her helpless mother used to weep bitter tears. The Manager of the institution saw the highest officials in that connection. But how could they move in the matter without the girl's taking the initiative and some gentlemen coming forward to give evidence for her. The bad character one day went to her house and kicked up a violent row. This is how he over-did himself. In sheer desperation the girl had to seek redress in the court. The Manager of the institution came boldly forward to give evidence for her. You can imagine how much suffering the poor girl must have passed through at the hands of her persecutór. But she went through all this mire and the bad character was convicted. This had a very wonderful moral effect. Those who were prostrated under the iron-wheel of the oppression of the bad character realized that the Governmet was mightier than any bad character and those who boldly stand up against wrong do succeed.

Besides this, the harrassment of girls which had grown a bit frequent in the city, lessened. Other bad characters also took a leaf out of this punishment. When the bad character came back after completing his sentence, he found all his support gone and his evil might lost.

Is not a battle fought for justice and honour worth the fight ?

A STUDENT.—It is, Sir. But, should we take note of every slander or every harrassment ?

TEACHER.—If you come in the forefront as a public man, you should not mistake every criticism as a slander. Whatever

you can easily repudiate by pen or by tongue, never have recourse to drastic steps ?

But there are slanders and slanders. Suppose a man writes against a woman doubting her chastity and purity. That cannot be ignored or looked lightly. To woman her chastity is the supremely precious jewel. She knows that if she loses it, at least in India, she loses everything. This slander, therefore, cannot be ignored. A woman who pockets this, fails in her duty to herself and the world.

In the same way, if atrocious lies are circulated against a public worker which are calculated to destroy all his reputation he would fail in his duty if he does not take a drastic step. Fear of scars in the fight should not demoralize him.

A STUDENT.—But why it is, Sir, that ordinarily men and women are afraid of moving the Government machinery ?

TEACHER.—In our land, centuries of slavery has produced inertia. We cannot put up a fight for honour, justice and truth. We let our bodies and bones be crushed under the juggernaut car rather than stand up for a cause of truth. We let millions of our own daughters be immolated on the funeral pyre under the name of Sati. This custom remained in vogue for thousands of years. And yet we did not rise in arms against it. We wanted to have an incense of praise from our people and as a price let our daughters and mothers be burnt alive. Absence of higher senses and abnormal hunger for word of praise of those who constitute our society, made us potential murderers of our mothers, daughters and sisters.

It is this hunger for word of praise of our community people which is responsible for continuance of all evil social customs which have robbed us of national vitality. It is this hunger for word of praise which is keeping today millions of Hindu widows in enforced widowhood, even though higher stratum of society would support them if they wanted to remarry. Millions of our widows who were anxious to marry when even law was in their favour embraced Islam and Christianity in order to avoid being pointed at. These two cults encouraged them in remarriage and they left all their culture and close relatives because they could not face being denied the word of praise of Hindu society.

At every step this paralysed portion of Hindu society has

dared to fight against legislation if it is moved to their best interest.

A STUDENT.—I do understand, Sir, that it is heroic to fight against untruth and falsehood, but hunger for word of praise robs us of the vitality to put in fight if those whose word of praise we want, are not in its favour. Any low-love that makes us prove false to the cause of honour, truth and justice is an evil force and it cannot enable us even to fight for our self-preservation.

TEACHER.—Every low-love vitiates our moral and soul vitality. A hunger for word of praise of our community proves one of the most dangerous low-loves specially when it wants a sacrifice of truth, honour and justice.

## SELFISHNESS

TEACHER.—I have explained to you the dangers of vanity and love of praise. The third destructive force which works as an enemy of the corporate life of man and his higher happiness is the love of selfishness. A lover of selfishness thinks and acts keeping pleasure of *his own self* to be supreme. If he makes any sacrifice of money, of possession, etc., he does so in order to satisfy his selfishness. The basis of his relationship with others is to wring maximum amount of happiness for himself.

A STUDENT.—Are not, Sir, those men and women unselfish who marry and beget children because thereby they have to sacrifice their own personal happiness for others?

TEACHER.—No. It is not true that because a man marries and begets children and is moved to make one or another kind of sacrifice for them, hence he becomes necessarily above selfishness. On the contrary in largest majority of cases men and women marry and have children but keep their own happiness foremost.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly illustrate this ?

TEACHER.—There is a beautiful story written by a Bengali author. In that story the character of a married couple is depicted. The father of the family died leaving two sons. The elder brother who was married, had some feeling for his younger brother and brought him up comfortably and even got him married. But the wife of the elder brother was selfish. She somehow or other persuaded her husband, who was a slave to her, to drive out his younger brother from his house. The elder brother actually expelled his brother and his wife from his house. When this selfish woman had achieved the object, she brought her own mother and her brother to live on the earnings of her husband. He was given to bribes-taking and the time came when he was exposed and his officer wanted him at least

to return the money of the Government which he had misappropriated. His officer would have let him go with a warning if he had simply paid up the amount. However, the man had given every pie of his earnings to his wife and, therefore, he requested her to give him at least the amount which he had to pay back. The woman out of her extreme selfishness refused to pay him anything. The result was that her husband was convicted and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. This woman thus let her husband suffer and be disgraced but did not part with a pie for his good. Such is the havoc which selfishness works even in the heart of a woman in relation to her own husband.

It may be said that the above story may or may not be true at all. But there is the story of a man which is perfectly true and which he himself contributed in the columns of a journal. He wrote that he was a shy man and, therefore, naturally avoided women. He never attended any mixed function, i.e., where both men and women joined. He was quite at home with men but felt very awkward with women. Once he had to attend a mixed social function where a girl, scenting his awkwardness apparently felt sympathy for him and went and talked with him. Gradually she taught him dancing and such other things which could make him popular with women. This shy man gradually fell in love with that girl and in his awkward way he expressed his feeling to her. She agreed and they were married. This young man felt deeply grateful to the girl and was anxious to do anything for her, but this girl was selfish. As soon as she married him, she asked him to engage a woman as a cook. After some days he found her sitting in a tired and dejected mood. He felt for her and asked her the reason of her depression. She said that one maid servant was not enough for her as she could attend only to cooking while several other domestic affairs were a constant strain on her. So she requested him to engage another servant. He satisfied her wish. After a year or so, her good-for-nothing brother who had been a failure in his business appealed to her to prevail upon her husband to lend him £2000. Without caring to enquire whether her husband could afford the amount or not, she practically forced his hands, against his better judgement, to part with the money which left him in a straitened condition. Thereafter he explained to her that he was not able to bear further financial

strain of heavy bills of her expenditure. He made a budget for every month and asked her to work according to it. But every month the expenditure would go beyond the income. If he raised any objection, this woman would make any amount of fuss. Then her sister lost her husband. She invited her and her child to live with her for sometime. But she prolonged the stay indefinitely. One day her brother again came and asked her to induce her husband to pay him £1000 more because he had expanded his business and would face ruin if the amount was not forthcoming. This selfish woman caring little for her husband's financial condition joined with her brother in influencing him to pay the amount. This was the last straw that broke the camel's back. It was then that the husband, who had come to realize her selfishness in its true colours, gave her a bit of his mind and left the house for good. This is how selfishness broke the house of a man who had married out of love. Thus you would see how selfishness works as an enemy in every relation.

A STUDENT.—Could you kindly tell us how this selfishness works among other relations?

TEACHER.—There are even worse cases of sons who because of their selfishness have behaved more like brutes than men, in relation to the authors of their own being. The history abounds with such cases. You know of a Mughal king who dethroned his father and put him in jail where the poor father ended his last days. You know also of a Khilji king who brought about the death of his loving uncle in order to succeed to the throne. You can, therefore, see that selfishness drives sons even to imprison and kill their parents and other benefactors.

A STUDENT.—You have given us, Sir, examples of all such sons who have been cruel to their fathers. Do sons behave similarly in relation to their mothers?

TEACHER.—Selfishness is a blind force. It does not take count of the fact whether the victim of selfishness is one's father or mother, brother or sister, wife or husband, son or daughter. I have heard of a very pathetic case of a person who was earning a lot but who drove out his mother from his house because he had to please his wife and thus his mother ended her days by doing very menial service in some other families in order to earn her livelihood.

It may perhaps be said that sons alone are guilty of this selfishness. Even daughters who are considered to be tender-hearted become stone-hearted when they are swayed by selfishness. About two years ago the press literally screamed with the news of how a daughter conspired with her husband to kill her own father because both of them wanted the money possessed by the father. The poor father was murdered and this criminal pair was brought to book. You can, therefore, see that selfishness is the mother of several very serious crimes. The legal records are full of facts how selfishness leads women to kill their husbands and the husbands to kill their wives, mothers to kill their children and the children to kill their mothers. The double murder case of Agra which shook the whole of India, was nothing but the criminal connection, due to low-love of happiness, which a pair had with each other. This was a case of an Anglo-Indian Medical Officer who fell in love with the wife of an English merchant. In order to possess each other, they tried to do away with their married partners. It was the wife of the merchant who administered to her husband small dozes of arsenic which broke his health and ultimately took him to the grave. The Medical Officer hired some bad characters to enter his house and murder his wife. It was the feeling of possessiveness which led the pair to such terrible crimes. They were consequently found out, tried and convicted. The hard-heartedness which this guilty pair possessed was due to their utter selfishness.

Recently the news appeared in several papers of a woman who murdered her two children in order to please her paramour who would not otherwise keep her in his house and marry her. In order, therefore, to have her own happiness, she lost even motherly love which is considered to be the mightiest force in woman.

I know of a brother who misappropriated money invested with him by his own sister with the result that his sister lost the sanity of her mind and became a lunatic. This cruel brother guided by his love of possessing money or greed did not care a farthing what happened to his sister. You all, therefore, can realize that when a man is led primarily by the consideration of his own happiness, he does not consider any relation sacred and is thus liable to break every noble tie and even to commit

very serious crimes.

A STUDENT.—All the above examples, Sir, that you have given, relate to the family circle. Can you illustrate how this selfishness plays havoc in the world ?

TEACHER.—Yes. One day I was sitting in a court, when an old man aged about sixty-five came there and sobbed out his sorrow to the Magistrate. His wife had died and he had his only daughter whom he had brought up with care. He got this only child very late in his life. She was hardly fourteen when she left his house in company of a young man in order to go and marry him. She was a minor according to law and it was evident that the father who knew the antecedent of the boy and his financial condition, spurned the very idea of giving her hand to him. This young girl being blinded by her own selfishness left her father without a thought. As she was minor, her seducer was arrested and she was brought in the court and handed over to her father. It was a terrible sight to see how the girl stood unaffected by the sobs and tears of her aged father while the young man stood defiant. However, the law had its own course and the man was convicted for having kidnapped a minor girl.

There is another story of a woman who was produced in the court and who related how a person who was present in the court, had seduced her away in order to keep her in a brothel and gain money out of the ignoble profession. This poor woman was decoyed from her husband's house on a false pretext and brought to the house of ill-fame. In order to earn money, that hard-hearted man not only broke the home but ruined a human soul. All women-traffickers possess this brutality which is due to their utter selfishness and greed. Only two or three months ago, the story of an American girl appeared who had fallen into the hands of a gang who trafficked in women. This poor girl hardly aged 18 or 19 was most cruelly beaten and threatened and thus led to adopt the dirty profession. Her kidnapper was paid £30 by a couple who were also engaged in this nefarious trade. This girl was mortgaged to them to recover their amount. Her health was broken. The doctor who was consulted by that infamous pair told them that the girl needed perfect rest and that they should not press her into the trade. But that infamous pair hardened by their



greed' paid no heed to the doctor's advice and broke her health altogether. In desperation this girl escaped and disclosed all the facts to the police and thus the terrible gang was brought to book.

Besides these soul-raking incidents, what is happening in various departments of Government ? The greedy clerks and officers commit lots of atrocities because of their greed or selfishness. Once a man related to me the story of a *patwari* whom an Indian military officer approached with an order to assign certain lands to him which he was granted as a reward for his military services. The *patwari* wanted a substantial gratification from the officer which the latter refused to give. The result was that the lands which were assigned to the officer were most of them unproductive. When the officer was shown these lands he felt deeply shocked. He reported the matter to the highest officer who, it is said, smiled and asked him if he had given any gratification to the *patwari*. The officer said that he had refused. "And the result of your refusal to give the gratification to the *patwari* is that you have got the worst land," said the officer. Later on it is said, the *patwari* was paid some amount by the officer and good land was given to him in place of the previous one. This is how greed makes monster of people !

This province knows the case of a District Judge who acquitted real culprits in a sensational case because he had received heavy bribes in the form of gold nuggets.

How this greed sometimes makes people most terrible can be evident from the following incident which happened in a place I know of. There was a *zamindar* who had good lands. His neighbour who was a most powerful man deprived that poor *zamindar* of all the lands and drove him out of the village. After the land was taken away from him the poor man had no money even to move the courts. He was not even able to get one single witness to give evidence in his favour. The persons who dispossessed him claimed adverse possession. How they had succeeded with the petty revenue officials to get the entries made in the Government records in their favour is a sealed book. But the *tehsildar* and others knew that the fraud had been committed and in the open daylight a poor man was robbed of all his lands. They were anxious to have the case

brought before them and actually one *tehsildar* took up the complaint of the poor man and issued warrants against the powerful man. But the tragedy was that he was not able to produce a single witness. Thus a greedy man robbed a poor man of all his lands and reduced him to abject poverty. This was the conduct shown by one neighbour to another.

Selfishness does not take count even of friendships. Lately a big memorial was published in several English dailies. It was from a Hindu officer who complained how a brother officer had deprived him of his daughter. In that memorial it was shown that both these officers lived at one place. The Muslim officer used to visit the house of the Hindu officer and mix with his girl. The Muslim officer was then transferred to another place. The wife and the daughter of the Hindu officer went to home town and while on their way back passed through the place where the Muslim officer was posted. The memorial further said that the mother and the girl went to see the Muslim officer in his house and after sometime the mother was asked to leave the place as her daughter would not go with her. Thus the utter selfishness which both the girl and the Muslim officer showed towards the feelings of the parents or a fellow officer, wrung the heart of the girl's parents and others. The girl was not shown to the mother and, therefore, the father believed that she was forced to remain there. As she was grown up, the legal machinery could not be moved. This incident created a lot of agony to those who were interested in the girl but utter selfishness terribly hardened the heart of that Muslim officer who trampled under feet all claims of friendship and trust in order to have his own happiness.

Selfishness does not only trample upon the claims of friendship and trust but it tramples under feet even the claims of reverence and worship. In *The Illustrated Weekly of India* facts were given of a sadhu who was the guru or spiritual guide of a big banker. The sadhu occupied the *gaddi* of an old temple and had in his possession a bundle of costly pearls or jewels. They belonged to the temple and were to be treated as trust. When the sadhu went on a pilgrimage, he entrusted this bundle to his disciple—telling him that in case he died on the pilgrimage, he could dispose off the pearls as he pleased as there was none to succeed after he left. But in case

he returned, the bundle was to be given back to him. The sadhu returned after some years and claimed the bundle. The banker, who had come to realize how precious the pearls were had already disposed them off and grown very rich. He, therefore, told the sadhu insolently that the sadhu was telling a lie that he had deposited the bundle with him. The sadhu least expected such a dark act of ingratitude and breach of trust from his own follower. He was an old man and the shock was too much for him. He died after sometime cursing the family. The family fell on bad days, not monetarily but concerning their health. The writer puts it that after the third generation there was no member of the family to enjoy the riches. This is not the only case where the evil doer met a sad fate. In the case of the landlord who dispossessed a poor *zamindar* of his land as stated above, tragedies after tragedies haunted that family of tyrants. If the cases were collected of how evil pays a man here and on this earth, they would form an instructive reading to illustrate the fact that in order to kill a sinner his sin itself is sufficient.

## SELFISHNESS AND CREATIVENESS

TEACHER.—I have told you in my last lecture that selfishness tramples even upon the claims of family love, friendship, trust, reverence, worship, etc. Somebody can ask why a selfish man has nothing sacred in life. The reason is this : The song which he daily sings, and which may be called the fundamental song of his, runs as under :—

“As far as possible I should get happiness in one form or another from various objects and persons, but on my own part I should not raise even a little finger of mine to contribute to the welfare or happiness of others, so much so that I should not make any return even for the countless and invaluable services which I daily receive from others.”

If we analyse this fundamental song of the selfish being, we can see that though he is himself anxious to extract maximum of happiness from others, he himself is not prepared to do anything with the object of contributing to the happiness and the welfare of others. He goes to the satanic extent of not making even a satisfactory return in work or labour for the wages or cash received by him.

A STUDENT.—Such a person, Sir, is bound to be a drag on society.

TEACHER.—Surely he is. It is a general cry in our land that the workmen engaged on constructing buildings try to work as little as possible and charge as much as possible. One gentleman told me that his coolies, masons and carpenters who were engaged on daily wages did not turn out in un-supervised eight hours as much work as they turned out within one hour and half when he supervised their work. From this it is evident that all the workmen were busy in idleness so that they should not honestly turn out work adequate for the wages they received. This is why labour, though apparently cheap in our

land, becomes very costly because of this selfishness of the persons employed.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly illustrate this from the life of the educated persons ?

TEACHER.—Yes. It is a common saying that a clerk goes out two dozen times to smoke, one dozen times to make water and any number of times for gossip. This may be an exaggerated criticism of their lazy life but there is no doubt that it was their laziness born of their selfishness which made them inefficient and costly even at the salary they drew.

It is said of a *tehsildar*, who was a high-caste Hindu, that for a number of days he would not dispose off even the dak that he received, so much so that at times he would not even open the telegrams sent to him. In his judicial work his attitude was still more painful. Whenever he came to the office, he would sit for hours to dispose off the work and clear off lot of arrears but after one day's hard work, he would lapse into a week of laziness.

I have personally met one officer who talked to me about his office work. I asked him why it was that there were so many arrears in almost every department of Government. Talking about himself, he said, "Have I sold my soul to the Government that I should worry myself about the arrears. I have to put in some hours of service every day and I do that. But why should I worry myself to death about the despatch. I have to do the work leisurely and I do so. If there are arrears left, it is not my fault." If the officer had realized his duty honestly, he could not take the view that he took about his work. In fact he wanted his full pay and it was no concern of his to make full return for the pay he received.

Leaving these clerks and officers, what is the case with students? Their parents provide them with food and clothing and perfectly care-free time to exclusively devote to their studies. Do they do so? Ninety per cent students try to postpone doing their work as much as it lies in their power. They neglect their class work for months together. It is only in the last few months before the examination that they begin their studies, cursing their books, cursing their teachers, cursing the examination and passing their time in mental condition of irritation and worry. They cannot believe that all their worries and

irritations are due to their own fault. They never believe that they are utterly lazy because they are utterly selfish. Even though they know that their salvation lies in studies, they would not be a bit stirred to work. Do-nothing life appeals to them the most. They are anxious, therefore, to have as many holidays as possible.

A STUDENT.—Sir, this is true.

TEACHER.—There is an amusing story of such a lazy and selfish student who studied in a college against his own wishes. He was intelligent and he was given all the facilities. The result was that he went upto M.A. and appeared for M.A. examination. It is said that as soon as his M.A. examination was over, he placed all his books in a long line, took up his shoe and went on striking every book saying, "You monsters, you had spoiled my peace of mind and given me lot of worry. Let this be your punishment. I will never touch you again, nor see your face." This is how a lazy and selfish being considers even books as his enemies. Such a person can never love education or knowledge. This is how the spirit of laziness and love of selfishness robs a student of the nectar of knowledge.

A STUDENT.—Sir, this example is really very amusing.

TEACHER.—There are several other instances which show how this selfish and lazy spirit makes students shun education. The majority among those who fail does not consist of dunces. They are intelligent enough but they are lazy. They do not take help even from their innate intelligence. They go on losing years after years of their precious lives, often times never awakening to their tragic way of life.

A STUDENT.—This state of things is indeed most painful. I can see that selfishness makes a man incapable of even taking full advantage of his intellectual powers which are very valuable possessions of his and which he is wasting for no other object in view but for his laziness.

TEACHER.—This is not the only loss that a selfish student suffers in life. There are very brilliant students who would do lot of creative work if they were but less selfish. At least five per cent out of highly educated persons can do creative and productive work. If they do not do so, it is because they have no feelings for others. They never feel that as the productions of others have helped them to become enlightened graduates and

thus benefitted them, they in their turn owe a similar duty to others to produce something for them. Their selfishness makes them so miserly that they want to carry with them even after their death, the knowledge and the truths which they had the good fortune to possess. I remember several cases of very brilliant people who used all their brilliance to get money but never let the world profit by the great knowledge which was the source of their income. They came to possess certain truths which would have proved most helpful to others, but they would never write a line or speak a word about them, to let the world share with them.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly illustrate this ?

TEACHER.—Let me first take the cases of those who have come in possession of several very efficacious drugs. I know that my eldest brother suffered during his childhood from cancer of the leg. As he was the first born son, a lot of money was spent to get him cured. His case was pronounced as an incurable one. My mother told me that one day she was sitting in a most dejected mood with my brother lying in her lap, when a sadhu passed by. Moved by sympathy he asked her to bring a small piece of used cotton over which he applied certain ointment. The sadhu applied that ointment on my brother's cancer wound and cured him. Where all the best doctors had failed, this sadhu succeeded. But this sadhu never gave this prescription to the world, while he would have immensely served the ailing public by this beautiful drug.

I am told that in one of the hill stations there is a person who possesses a wonderful specific medicine for piles. It is said he has cured lots of persons. He has been requested often to charge a very heavy amount and give the prescription. But he would not do so. If he dies with this great knowledge, he deprives the world of something very valuable. A wealthy miser has at least on his death-bed to leave the wealth behind but this terrible miser carries his wealth beyond his grave. How pathetic is all this ! There are, again, barbers in our land who possess great specifics for carbuncles and other very serious sores. They would never disclose their prescriptions and it is often that such useful drugs are lost with their lives for ever.

A STUDENT.—Sir, this is true so far medicines are concerned.

TEACHER.—This is also true in various other walks of life. There are persons who possess very great literary capacity. I know at least of one man who was a fine poet and a good prose writer. If he had only spared some time every day to produce something, he would have created a very ennobling and inspiring literature. Sometimes I requested him to write but he died without giving the world the benefits of his literary attainments and experience. There could be no other reason for such a refusal except that this production would not bring him money from the public, though they would have brought him lots of blessings from the readers who would have profitted by his writings.

A selfish man always thinks in terms of pleasure of his self and never in terms of pleasure of others. There is another person still alive who used to earn prizes at poetic competitions and who possessed distinctly a very great capacity for literary production. Years have rolled on and he has not written one single line. The reason is plainly that he is so busy with earning money that nothing interests him which does not bring money to his pocket. He does not think that it is a great privilege of man to do something creative for the happiness and welfare of others. The happiness and welfare of others are matters of no value to him

A STUDENT.—This is the saddest feature of selfishness that in everything we should think only of our own self and never of others.

TEACHER.—It is true. Those who have ever come out of selfishness have not only enriched the world but made their own memory loveable, precious and immortal. It is said of a great artist that he was asked to draw paintings on the roof of a church on wages. He refused to take wages, on the ground that consideration for money would be a handicap to the expression of his art. He is said to have spent years on that work. It is an immortal work. He did it for the love of art and, therefore, he could express the best in himself. If you understand this, you will realize that selfishness does not make us even to live at our best. When we do a thing out of love for it, we naturally do not let petty considerations to warp our intelligence. Even in ordinary life, they prosper most who do a thing for the love of it. I narrated to you the incident of a carpenter who loved his



job. One day, a judge employed him to mend the door to his fence. When he returned from the court at sun-set he found that half the work was done when the whole could have been done. He rebuked the carpenter and said, "Don't expect to have tomorrow's wages for this work. You had to complete it for the wages of today." The carpenter replied, "Sir, I won't claim the wages for tomorrow." The Judge said, "Why have you then spent the whole day and turned out only half the work?" He replied, "My work is my character. If I do things shabbily, I degrade my character. My character is more valuable to me than my wages. When I have finished mending the gate, I will have the satisfaction of having done my best." The Judge was deeply impressed and it was this trait of character of the man which brought him to the top of his profession.

As opposed to this, I read another story, perhaps in the same book, of an artist who had captured the market for his paintings. When there was very large demand for his paintings, he was swayed more by the consideration of profits than the quality of the work he produced. One of his benefactors expressed his regret that his paintings had become common place and yet he never woke up to the fact that he had lost his art.

When a person becomes selfish, his creative work necessarily suffers. He may earn money but his contribution would be poor. This is the greatest harm which is done to the man by his own selfishness. Not only he loses all consideration for the happiness and welfare of others but loses the best in him. If a man loses what is best in him and cannot, therefore, function to the full capacity of his creative faculties, he naturally suffers the heaviest loss. He cannot grow to the full stature of his powers. He, therefore, becomes stunted in his growth, distorted in his vision and poor in his productions. If all other aspects of selfishness were to be passed over, this one aspect alone should impress a man with the horrors of selfishness.

A STUDENT.—We can understand, Sir, that selfishness is injurious to the growth of our own powers. If we do not do a useful thing for the love of it, we would surely sacrifice it for our selfish ends. But is selfish man a national loss?

TEACHER.—Yes, he is. A nation is great according to the number of those who contribute to its welfare. That nation

enjoys greater number of physical blessings whose children contribute more of wonderful discoveries and inventions for its physical welfare. That nation is financially strong whose children are prepared to make largest number of sacrifices for developing national industries and national resources. That nation is socially strong whose children are prepared to make largest sacrifices in doing social welfare work. Those nations are morally strong, whose children make the largest contribution to the strengthening of the moral tone of their nation not only by developing an excellent moral life in themselves but by devoting their energies in moral uplift work of others. Nation is a corporate organism. If every organ lives for itself the organism will die. Every organ, therefore, has to become a living organ by contributing to the soundness of the entire life. A selfish being is an unsound organ. If all the people in a nation are selfish beings, they will bring about disintegration of that nation.

## INGRATITUDE BORN OF SELFISHNESS

TEACHER.—In the last two lectures on selfishness, I have explained to you how selfishness leads a man to trample upon the claims of family love, friendship, trust, reverence, worship, etc., and how it stunts the moral and spiritual growth of its victim. I want to talk to you of another phase of selfishness. This is in no way less dangerous and less harmful than the above two phases. A selfish man cannot serve even one from whom he has received countless favours.

A STUDENT.—Once I happened to go into the house of a friend who had an only daughter and who was studying in a college. I found the mother of the girl cooking in the kitchen. She was ill. The girl was quite hale and hearty and yet she let her ailing mother go and cook for her. If she had any feeling, she would have compelled her to take rest and not to cook for her. But this was not the limit. While I sat down in a chair near the cot on which this young girl was sitting, I heard her getting peevish with her mother for not showing the expected promptitude to bring the meal for her. The mother was all kindness and the girl was all impatience. The meal was served to the girl and the mother had to come twice or thrice out of her kitchen to give her chapati. When she had finished with the meals, she asked her mother to take the dishes away. These dishes were washed by the mother as there was no servant. I saw this and felt deeply pained. But I did not consider it a suitable time for me to express my pain to the girl. Now, here was a definite case of a child who had received countless favours from the author of her being, and yet she would not serve her even when the mother was ill, but went to the extent of extracting maximum of work from her.

ANOTHER STUDENT.—Sir, such a conduct is, to say the least, most painful.

TEACHER.—Indeed it is so. A selfish person is also helpless. He has no consideration for the happiness or welfare of others. It is not true that only a girl child shows ingratitude born of selfishness. Girls are often more serviceable to their parents than sons. The conduct of sons is still more painful. I heard from a very reliable source, an incident of the life of a son which was still more painful. His father was a widower. He fell seriously ill, so much so that he was not able to move and attend to his ordinary needs. During the day there was no difficulty of attending to his needs as there were many servants. The duties at night time were taxing. One of his sons volunteered that he would keep awake for three or four hours and serve his father. The father had a nap. The son finding his father in momentary rest slipped away from there and slept in his family quarters. The father woke up soon after and gave a call to his son, perhaps to bring water for him to drink. The son was absent. He gave repeated calls and there was no response. At last another son of his, the one who often attended to him and found joy in his father's service, woke up. He rushed to his father's side. The father asked him where his brother was. He was called from his family quarters. Instead of expressing regret for having failed in his duties, he got petulant and sulky and the result was that his father never again made a call on him for his personal services. This hard-hearted boy never cared for the offence taken by his father and never expressed regret and never volunteered his services again. He was anxious enough to have share in the family property, but never anxious to serve his father whose love and whose money he demanded the most.

A STUDENT.—Sir, this conduct also is highly shameful.

TEACHER.—Such is the natural outcome of selfishness. Selfishness hardens the heart of a person and, therefore, blinds him. He is not able to see his benefactors. His memory has no record of the favours received. It has record enough of the complaints against his benefactors and this is natural for a selfish man. He lives for himself. If there is any lack of attention paid to him or service rendered to him by others, he seldom forgets. If he receives abundance of attention and most loving service, he considers them as his rightful dues and, therefore, not worthy of much attention or serious concern on his

part. This is why it is very difficult to make a child understand how his parents deny themselves a lot of things in order to make him happy. When he cannot see this, how can he feel for his parents? Several times this selfishness hardens the hearts of children to such an extent that they grow impatient and wish their father's early death, so that they may come in possession of all his money. There was a gentleman who was considered almost a court bird—so often he was found in courts. He was a money-lender. He had grown very rich, but he would not part with a penny even for his own sons. The sons looked with a greedy eye at the pile he was making. Their patience was exhausted. One day, the money-lender suddenly disappeared. It is not known upto now what happened to him. It was however, very strongly suspected that the sons had a hand in getting him killed. The rumour was very strong and so strong that it became a legend. Oh ! how sons kill their father in order to have money ! This is ingratitude of the darkest dye.

A STUDENT.—Sir, indeed it is so.

TEACHER.—I have talked to you about the attitude of children towards parents. Similar is the attitude of selfish persons towards their spiritual benefactors. The historical incident of how Gangu, a Brahman, betrayed the mother and the two infant children of Guru Gobind Singh, for the sake of money is sufficiently staggering and illustrative of how selfishness develops terrible ingratitude. It was because of this betrayal that these children became the martyrs and all that led to several disastrous wars. In the Christian annals, the life of Judas is painted as the life of a person who for a few pennies betrayed his master into the hands of the enemies who eventually crucified him. Judas, therefore, stands for a person who is most ungrateful. If it is true that he betrayed his master for a few pennies, his selfishness is indeed most shocking. Among the Muslims a conflict has been going on between the Shias and the Sunnies. The Shias complain that Imam Husain, the grand son of their Prophet, was also betrayed by some followers of the Muslim religion. This betrayal also was due to no other consideration, but that of power or position. Those who had grown selfish went to the extent of murdering the beloved grandson of their own Prophet, whom they believed as the only mediator between them and the so-called God. The persons

who were so deeply indebted to the Prophet paid his own family by such an ingratitude. Yazid who is considered most responsible for this tragedy is being cursed by millions every year on the Karbla Day. Yazid was guilty of this because he was selfish. He wanted to be the Khalifa and he had no scruples in staining his hands with the blood of the family of his highest benefactor. These are all historical facts as described by the followers of the above creeds. Spiritual benefactors are considered highest benefactors. And yet selfishness makes one guilty of ingratitude even towards such great benefactors.

A STUDENT.—Sir, we never believed that selfishness was capable of bringing about such a perversion. We believed it to be of harmless character.

TEACHAR.—If you get light to see selfishness in its true nature, you will get horrified. Let me take the instances of the conduct of human beings towards their animal benefactors. It is an obvious fact that humanity has been from times immemorial receiving countless services from the animal world. Every day rivers of milk flow out of these useful and serviceable animals for millions of human children. We drink milk, we take butter, we use ghee. We admit that these things are not only nourishing but also very helpful in keeping our health strong and sound. Even if we receive only this kind of service we should feel deeply indebted to the animals and should express it by loving and cherishing them. But what is the actual attitude of mankind towards these dumb but milk-giving and serviceable animals? With one hand a human being milks the goat, sheep or cow and with the other he applies a dagger on its throat. Countless animals are being butchered every year for the dining tables of human beings. Matricidal lunatic is considered the darkest soul. What about the being who suckles the milk of these useful and serviceable animals and yet kills them? Is it in any way an offence less serious than matricide? But humanity does not view it in this light, because it is hardened by selfishness. It tells these good friends of ours, "We want your milk all right. But we want your flesh and blood too. You must understand we are human beings. We are superior to you. You are made for us. This is how our God has told us. Hence you must not grudge when after taking maximum service from you, we look with a greedy eye on your

flesh and blood. We don't want your flesh after you die a natural death. Our religion makes that flesh unlawful for us. You know we want our salvation. Therefore we have to murder you, either by uttering some words or by dealing one swift blow with a sword on your throat. This is how we want to vindicate the superiority of man over animals. We are made after the image of God and not you. Our code of conduct, towards you, therefore, is to be influenced by our superiority complex." This is the song of a selfish being. But whether this or that religion sanctions it, the action of a man, who kills an animal for his food, flows out of his ingratitude. Besides the milk that we get, we receive other forms of services from animals. From hoary ages the bullocks have been helping man in the cultivation of land. These animals, therefore, are necessary for man to give him food. They work like druges to serve their master. How does the master ordinarily treat them ? He feeds them only to keep them alive. He takes maximum work from them. He beats them. Even when they are wounded he takes work from them and he feels no scruples if he thereby shortens their life. Similar is the attitude of tongawalas towards their horses, or the drivers of other animals whom they yoke in their carts or in any other work. This attitude towards animals is scandalous but it grows out of human selfishness. Some laws have been brought into force to protect the animals from this inhumanity of man. But the laws cannot reach every form of inhumanity which man has invented as a result of his selfishness in relation to the animal world. The poisonous spring of his life—selfishness—distorts his vision and makes his life beastly. If you have understood how selfishness makes a man, who should love useful animals, a perfect savage, you can realize the horror of this phase of selfishness. If he finds beautiful birds, he wants to kill them for his sport. If he finds beautiful feathers of a bird, he kills it for trade. The death that he inflicts on these harmless beautiful birds is a torture taken to its fiercest form. If he sees the beautiful skin of some animals, he kills them for the purpose of trade. In fact for every selfish interest of his, he tortures and kills the animals who are his benefactors.

A man has to become a vegetarian and give up flesh-eating, because by killing animals for food, sport or trade he

develops ingratitude which degrades him. The mess of life that we find in family relations, or in social relations, in communal relations, in national or international relations, is to a very large extent due to the degrading feelings of man. Selfishness occupies a most prominent place among these infernal forces of man.

A STUDENT.—Sir, we could never realize that it is our selfishness that makes us blind to the favours that we receive from the animal world and that it is our selfishness that makes us so ungrateful towards them that for the sake of our own happiness, we not only practice tyranny on them but even kill them. In fact our social ethos have fed fat this feeling of ingratitude in relation to animals.

TEACHER.—If you see the attitude of man towards all his benefactors, whether animals or human beings, you will witness one thing that his selfishness makes him to think exclusively of himself. Such a being cannot think of another's happiness and another's welfare. This is why he cannot think of the happiness or welfare of even those from whom he daily and hourly receives favours.

A STUDENT.—Even a selfish man follows the principle of give and take.

TEACHER.—It is true that a selfish man has to follow the principle of give and take. But what he does is this. He gives only in that case where he feels that he cannot satisfy his selfishness without giving. But even there he gives as little as he possibly can ; while in taking he wants to take the maximum. There are persons who feed animals and feed them fat and they do so because they have to kill them as sacrifice. The idea behind this is that if he gives the fattest lamb, he will get greater reward in the next world. He does not nurse the lamb because of the consideration for the lamb, but because he wants his own salvation. Satisfaction of his selfishness is the sole object of his giving. Where selfish purpose is not to be served, he would not part with a penny as the saying goes in Hindustani : "he would not part even with his fever which is on him." He can, therefore, never feel for a benefactor as a benefactor. A grateful heart finds joy in giving, without the expectation of a selfish end. Such a joy is foreign to a selfish being.



## MORAL TRAGEDY OF SELFISHNESS

TEACHER.—In my last lecture, I tried to show you how a person, who is selfish, becomes ungrateful. To-day I want to give you a talk on various other evils flowing out of this poisonous spring of human life. One of the inevitable consequences of selfishness is, that a selfish man is not able to see the beauty of higher life in another person.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate this ?

TEACHER.—I know of a big man who occupied a very high position in the Government service. He was so much enamoured of the happiness obtained by the gratification of his greed for money that he could not comprehend how any person could be so foolish as to sacrifice money for any selfless interest. His son was a distinguished graduate and had high aspirations. The father would repeatedly tell him that he was wasting his life after stupid dreams. He used to impress upon him the fact that in the whole wide world, there was not a single person who had not the definite object of making money in any undertaking which he launched. He would go so far as to tell him that even those persons who had sacrificed their all for some humanitarian cause had also money as their ultimate object in view. He believed that the only possible ideal for every man is greed for money. In his own town, there lived a distinguished person who had resigned a big job and accepted the vow of poverty and was daily and hourly devoting himself to the service of others. He would attribute motives of greed even to such a selfless person. This shows what a blindness comes over a selfish person.

A STUDENT.—This is, Sir, an extreme case.

TEACHER.—My boy, you will have to revise your opinion when you enter life. After all, what does history teach us ? Men with definitely humanitarian motives in life have been

crucified or exiled or tortured to death or burnt alive for no other crime but that they were influenced by higher motives of conduct which the contemporary world could not see and could not admire. The foulest abuses have been showered on those who were real benefactors of humanity. There was no sin or crime of which they had not been considered guilty merely because men with sinful and criminal hearts could not conceive that the benefactors could be above those evils. It is a psychological truth that a person who is devoid of a certain feeling, will not be able to truly comprehend a person who possesses it. This is the reason why a selfish man cannot understand a charitable man and this is why a vindictive man cannot understand a forgiving soul. This is why a man blinded by bigotry cannot understand a person free from that poison. This is why a vain and egoistic person cannot understand a reverential heart. This is why a selfish person cannot understand a grateful heart. Our daily experiences confirm the truth of the above facts. Hence, if a selfish person is not able to understand the glory of a selfless person, it is not his fault. He is blind.

A STUDENT.—This is, Sir, a terrible form of blindness.

TEACHER.—It is. If a selfish person were to see the beauty of selfless life, he would, naturally, by comparison feel his own life as something degrading and he would try to get out of the disease. But, because he is drunken by the pleasure which he receives from the gratification of his selfishness, he has no sense left to see the beauty of selflessness. All the pleasure that a selfish man derives is from his own personal gratification and vain-glory. It is a task for him to sing the glory of another.

A STUDENT.—This is, Sir, a very severe form of punishment which a selfish person receives from his selfish life !

TEACHER.—It is true. There is another evil which proceeds out of selfishness. The selfish being harms another man and yet he is not able to see that he is harming somebody. The suffering of others does not reach his heart. On the contrary it jars on his being. He gets angry with any person who complains to him about his hard-heartedness. He wants the world to co-operate with him in all evil ways or get kicked.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate this ?

TEACHER.—Yes, by all means. There was a rich man who

was married when he was quite young. His wife was very loyal to him, as Hindu wives generally are. After about twenty years of his married life, he wanted to marry some young girl. He hit upon a plan. On one pretext or another, he sent his wife out. He bribed the intermediaries to arrange his betrothel. He was betrothed. It was then, that his own wife came to know how her home was being broken. She came back hurriedly from her father's house and immediately fell on the feet of her husband praying to him, that he should not destroy her happiness by bringing a co-wife. This selfish husband, who was intoxicated by his own lower pleasure, not only lost his temper, but actually kicked his wife when she kept her head on his feet. The poor woman screamed and grew half unconscious by the weight of her grief, but all that fanned the flame of his indignation. He would have killed the wife then and there if he had not had the terrors of law mocking at him.

There was another case which created a great sensation. There was a young man occupying a high job. He had a wife, two sons and a daughter. His wife was very much devoted to him and he had, therefore, no cause of complaint against her. There was a young educated girl—an utterly selfish being—who wanted this young man for her own gratification and, therefore, felt no scruples in decoying him and thus robbing her less-educated sister of her home and husband. Both the husband and the girl were callous and both of them, therefore, never cared for the agony that they produced in the life of that deserted wife. There was a very great public agitation but this sinful couple was not able, because of selfishness, to see the shameful part of their life. And so long as they were not able to see this shameful part of their life, it was not possible for them to do justice to that deserted wife. You can, therefore, see that selfishness, by making a man blind to his own harmful nature, robs him of all the chances in life to make any recompense to those whom he wrongs and he is, therefore, not in a position to do justice to others.

A STUDENT.—How can our relations be sweet with one another, if we do not become even just to another ?

TEACHER.—It is true, that by becoming just to others, we are saved from a lot of misery. If all of us were to be just to

one another, most of the crimes would end. Selfishness produces a very perverted form of injustice.

Sometimes, a selfish being shows a chapter of behaviour which is incomprehensible. There is a story of one master-soul who was loved very much by his society for his most elevating discourses. Whenever it was announced that he was to deliver a discourse, even those who did not like him otherwise, would flock to hear him. There was another person who was anxious to have glory for himself. Not being able to command the glory or respect which the master-soul commanded, his selfish heart, wanted to find satisfaction in putting all sorts of obstacles in the way of the master-soul. He would go to the extent of spreading false rumours of discrediting his work. If there were persons who were attracted by his greatness and who joined the society, this selfish person, being jealous of him, would publish the news that all those persons who were attracted towards him had deserted him. By doing all this, he would never feel pained. His satisfaction lay in robbing another of what he could not get for himself.

There were some boys who arranged a very successful poetical symposium. Some students did not join them. These students could not bear the idea that success should crown the efforts of the organisers of the symposium. They therefore, went on circulating the lie that the idea of holding the symposium was abandoned by the organisers. Where they could not circulate this lie, they circulated another one that some of the best poets were not coming, when in fact they were coming. This is how a selfish person tries to do injustice to another and harms him. In such a beastly behaviour, he finds nothing to be ashamed of. With such a mentality, there is no room for a man ever to do justice to others. The trail of his entire life that he would leave behind would be the trail of broken hearts, injured souls, etc., due to the injustice born of his selfishness.

A STUDENT.—This is indeed most shocking.

TEACHER.—The work of a selfish person is not confined only to circulating lies in order to harm another. His feeling of injustice goes further. There was a person who was greedy. He had some acquaintance with a magistrate. One of his own friends came into trouble and was prosecuted. That person

approached his friend to exercise his influence over the magistrate and paid him nearly a hundred rupees to pass it on as a bribe to the magistrate. He went to the house of the magistrate but neither talked about the matter, nor paid the amount to him. The case went on and the accused person was fined. He felt aggrieved that he should have been fined even after he had paid the bribe. He went and expressed his feelings to his friend. This friend, most shamefacedly, told him : "My friend if I had not paid the bribe to the magistrate, he would have sent you to jail. Be grateful that you have been let off with a fine." This was a breach of faith by one friend in relation to another. But the selfish man rarely awakens to the truth that such a conduct is most reprehensible.

A STUDENT.—How can persons establish right sort of attitude towards others when they are selfish ?

TEACHER.—They cannot. Not only a selfish person is unjust and guilty of breach of faith but he is often disloyal. All such clerks or the employees of the Government who take bribes are disloyal both to the Government and the people. They disgrace the Government and trouble the people. They are said to be public servants, and yet they betray the public by showing their conduct as public enemies. Look at the Railway department, the Police department, the Public Works department, the Revenue department, the Judicial department and you come across thousands among their establishments who are thoroughly dishonest and who signalise their services to the Government by disgracing it and their service to the people by fleecing them. This is all due to selfishness. It is true that corruption would to some extent be discouraged by strong measures. But so long as man is selfish, he is a born dishonest being. He would only wait for an opportunity. There is a story recorded of a confirmed bribestaker who was a very competent man and whom his officer did not want to dismiss. He was, therefore, transferred to a job where he had merely to count the waves of the river. His boss felt that the man would be worried by such a work and would have no chance to take bribes. It is said, that the dishonest man earned more as bribes there than he used to earn in the office. He did not permit any person to take bath in the river without giving bribes. Those who did not give him bribes were straightaway told that as he was deputed

to count the waves, he would fail in his duty, if the persons took bath and disturbed the waves, or if they crossed the river in boats. Such are the ways in which a dishonest person seeks the satisfaction of his selfishness.

Again, most of the thefts that are being committed in several houses are, in many cases, the work of the conspiracy of the domestic servants with the thieves. Lately, two boys were kidnapped by the help of a servant of the family. Some girls are kidnapped by the agency of those who are either domestic servants or some persons trusted by the owner of the house. This form of disloyalty has caused great amount of misery in many a home. Selfishness, therefore, is not an ordinary thing as many persons believe. It forms the basis of any amount of sins and crimes, heartburnings and miseries.

A STUDENT.—This means, Sir, that nothing is sacred to a selfish man.

TEACHER.—In the case of the overwhelming majority of cases among the selfish persons, nothing is sacred to them. In a Calcutta A.P.I. message, dated January 22, 1941, we read : "The use of chalk as a substitute for quinine by nonethical and fraudulent manufacturers in Bengal and other provinces has come to the notice of the Public Health Department. The department is at present examining the different samples of quinine sold in the markets, several of which are stated to contain no quinine at all. It is stated that such cheap substitutes have no medicinal value at all".

A STUDENT.—This is horrible.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. This is why we are not able to get good food and medicinal articles from men who deal in them. Selfish man is a monster in human shape.

A STUDENT.—We could never, Sir, realize that selfishness was such a bane of mankind.

TEACHER.—The greatest loss that comes to a selfish being is that he is locked in the narrow dark cell of his self and is not, therefore, permitted by his selfishness to bask in the sunshine of higher virtues and higher ideals of soul-life. When he cannot see higher virtues and cannot see higher ideals, he has to live all his life in the dingy atmosphere of sins and crimes and evil-life. There can be no greater loss to a man than that his life should be vicious. There can be no greater

loss to a man than that his vision should be confined to merely material objects. As a blind man suffers the most, because he is shut out from the world of light, in the same way, a selfish man is unfortunate because he is shut out from the world of the noble side of human life. The physical blindness is a curse. Moral or spiritual blindness is ten thousand times a greater curse. It is sometimes surprising that theologians call non-God believers as materialists. They never realise that there can be no greater materialist than a selfish person. Humanity is practically full of selfish persons. Humanity is practically materialistic in life and ideals. Even the heaven promised to man is mostly sensual and materialistic. He is, therefore, the truest spiritual deliverer who can break our chains of selfishness. Any other deliverer is truly a so-called deliverer, i.e., a false deliverer.

## LOW-HATE DUE TO UNSATISFIED DESIRES

TEACHER.—The fourth disruptive and evil force or feeling in the heart of man which works havoc in human relations is called low-hate.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly explain what is meant by low-hate ?

TEACHER.—By low-hate we mean the feeling of repulsion which is produced in the heart of a person against one who obstructs him in the gratification of any of his low-loves of happiness.

A STUDENT.—What are the characteristics of this form of repulsion ?

TEACHER.—When low-hate is aroused in the heart of any one against any person or any living or non-living existence, he longs to hear or see that person or object come to harm or himself inflicts on him or induces others to inflict on him some tangible injury or harm. Nay, he finds joy or satisfaction to see or hear about that person's dear ones come to some positive harm or in inflicting on them or inducing others to inflict on them some real injury or harm ?

A STUDENT.—What are the forms, Sir, which this low-hate assumes ?

TEACHER.—It takes various forms. When a person desires another to help him in the fulfilment of any of his wishes, but that other person for some reason is not able to satisfy it, he receives a deep shock of heart. This shock perverts his mind. Not being conscious of the good of his soul, he receives a wound. This makes his mind septic and he develops low-hate.

A STUDENT.—How is it possible, Sir, for every one of our wishes to be satisfied by others ?

TEACHER.—It is not possible. But low-loves and low-hates are irrational forces. They extinguish the light of reason and



hence one who is dominated by them becomes insane.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly illustrate it ?

TEACHER.—In *The Hindustan Times* in the first week of July, I read a bit of news which was terrible. A son-in-law went to his father-in-law to have one hundred rupees from him as he was in need. The father-in-law expressed his inability to satisfy his wish. This shocked him so much and produced so much of low-hate in him that he took an axe and hacked his wife to death and set on fire his father-in-law's house.

A STUDENT.—Sir, this is hellish.

TEACHER.—Low hate is a hellish force. In the Punjab a terrible case took place. A graduate wanted his wife to get money from her father for him so that he may proceed to foreign countries for further studies. The girl failed to comply with his wishes. The boy and his mother then tortured her to death. In this case, the culprits were brought to book and received full measure of punishment.

A STUDENT.—Of what avail, Sir, is our education, then, if it cannot help us to restrain our passions and distinguish between right and wrong wishes.

TEACHER.—Education is impotent to give the light which can show one's own good or evil and impotent, too, to give power which can restrain our passions.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly make this point still more clear ?

TEACHER.—Two highly educated persons entered into wedlock. Both belonged to very high families. Both had been to foreign lands more than once. Both enjoyed very high social position. And yet years rolled on and they had been leading a dog and cat life. When I heard the entire tale of woe from one of the parties, the only fault that lay with both was that each one of them wanted his or her personal wishes to be satisfied by the other. It was conflict of their wishes and the consequent shocks due to their nonfulfilment, that developed low-hate in them. This low-hate destroyed their wedded life. They found joy in inflicting injury on each other.

A STUDENT.—Why could they not change this attitude?

TEACHER.—Low-hate produces insanity and in most of the cases, the one in fault is not able to realize his part of the mistake and hence the complications.

A STUDENT.—This is sad.

TEACHER.—Sometimes it is incomprehensibly satanic. There was a rich man who was not a married man. However, he led a gay life. He had ruined the life of one young girl who became unmarried mother and thus blasted her career only because this wicked man would not marry her and give legitimacy to the coming child. He had kept a mistress too who openly lived with him the life of shame. But this lustful man wanted new conquests. He had a good girl as his Secretary. He made amorous overtures to her. One day, finding her alone with himself, he went so far as to assault her. But she was a decent woman. She tore his face by her nails, kicked him and thus got out of his clutches. She then left his service. The matter leaked and there was a chorus of indignant cries of condemnation against him. This developed his low-hate for the girl abnormally. The method that he adopted to ruin her was singularly and satanically original. While lying on death bed, when even the wickedest heart relents, he made a will. In that will, he put the name of his well-known mistress as his beneficiary. He left her one thousand pounds. He put the name of that innocent girl also along with that woman, as one who was a consenting party to his amour and left one thousand pounds to her, too. This was a scandalous act. But even when departing for the next world, he did not forgive the innocent girl for not having satisfied his wishes. He tried to wreck her reputation by the lie in his will which was publicly read. She was fortunate that the man who loved her, had full faith and trust in her. He immediately married her and took her out of that place. But the monster dominated by low-hate did his very worst.

A STUDENT.—What a satanic force, Sir, is low-hate which hardens the heart of its victim, even when he is lying on death-bed!

TEACHER.—It is a satanic force. It makes one lose sight of everything sacred.

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly illustrate this?

TEACHER.—By all means. Years ago a terrible event happened in Bengal. A bold bad son who was the despair of his family, which had expelled him, became involved in a serious criminal case. Warrants were issued against him. He

wanted his father to stand bail for him. But the father refused to do so. The wicked son was so much enraged and upset by this refusal of his father to stand surety for him, that he went, brought out his gun and shot him dead.

A STUDENT.—Sir, how horrible is this !

TEACHER.—In the case of others it appears horrible. But if every one of us were to get light about this weakness, we would realize how hopelessly weak one feels in the hands of this force. There were two or three grown-up brothers. They found their mother an obstruction in the satisfaction of their wrong wishes. She was wise and experienced and she tried to keep her restraining influence on their erratic life. Not feeling themselves free to enjoy their wishes, unfettered by her constant watchfulness, they wanted to get rid of her. She fell ill and in a few days was unable to help herself. They hit upon a diabolical plan. They locked the door of her room from outside and left her to die for want of food and water. Such was the callousness which this low-hate produced in them.

A STUDENT.—How unsafe then, Sir, are our various relations at our hands ! Every one of us possesses certain wishes. If we are bent upon having all of them satisfied by others, we tread upon an insane path of life, and if non-fulfilment of any of our wishes develops in us low-hate, no body is safe in our hands.

TEACHER.—In fact this low-hate has produced hell in human relations. Not knowing the good of our soul, we want to have satisfaction of our wishes as be-all and end-all and hence we go on kicking those who obstruct us in their gratification.

There was the case of a highly educated couple who wanted to marry. They could not marry as the first wife of the man was alive. They both belonged to a sect which penalised bigamy. Hence finding that lawfully wedded wife as an obstruction, they wanted to remove her. And she was removed. She died a premature death due to the sinful machination of that couple.

In Agra double murder case, it was a wife who fell in love with her Doctor who was also married. They all belonged to a monogamous creed. The wife herself administered poison in small doses to her own loving husband till he died. She was thus free. But the Doctor wanted to remove his own wife—a

great obstruction to his sinful gratification. He hired rogues to break into his house and kill her. She was killed. But thanks to the police, the criminals were brought to book. The Doctor was hanged. The woman was given a penal servitude. No tie is sacred to this low-hate and no crime is too dark to be perpetrated by it.

There was another case which was decided by the court. In that case, a person wanted a loan from a money-lender. The money-lender refused any further loan to him as he was already heavily in debt to him. Seeing himself obstructed in the gratification of his wishes, he felt so deeply shocked and pained that a terrible form of low-hate developed in him. He was anxious to inflict harm on the money-lender. He, therefore, killed his own dear young daughter, took her corpse and concealed it in the fuel godown of the money-lender. The police was sent a report of the missing child. When the mystery was unravelled, it was proved that the man, having been obstructed in the gratification of his low wish, had grown so insane that he murdered his own daughter in order to involve his creditor.

A STUDENT.—When such instances are happening and every one is seeing them everyday, why does not man take lesson out of them ?

TEACHER.—So long man is not dominated by low-hate, he is sensible enough to understand the horror of such happenings. But what he fails to understand is that he also has wishes and hopes which he wants the world to satisfy and that non-gratification of these wishes makes him morally septic. He develops low-hate and becomes insane. Every one may not go to such extreme extents. But that the low-hate starts in man a train of evil wishes for the obstructor, is almost universal in the world when man is in utter darkness about himself and his own higher good.

A STUDENT.—Can you, Sir, give us some illustrations of every day life common to mankind ?

TEACHER.—I can give you any number of instances.

There was a girl studying in one of the schools in the Punjab. She had seen one of her class-mates wearing a fine *saree*. She wished to purchase a similar one. When she returned home, she asked her loving father to purchase the

*saree* for her. He promised to get her the *saree* next day when he returned from office. On the morrow, he was worn out by work and forgot to purchase it for her. The girl, who was all the day dreaming about it, got furious when she saw her farther returning without the *saree*. The father pleaded his exhaustion and mental dejection. But she was relentless. In order to injure her father who doted on her, she refused to take her dinner and went to bed. The father appealed to her, but failed. He also remained without food. Next day, early morning, the girl left for school without taking her breakfast. The father took her breakfast to her school. She spurned all his affectionate solicitations.

Imagine the form that low-hate born of unsatisfied wishes takes !

A STUDENT.—This is painful, Sir. But it is, in fact, the order of the day. In our own house, I one day found one of my brothers in tantrum because our father refused to send us to a cinema show which he considered not good enough for us. I myself have, on some occasions, refused to take meals and thus injured dear mother, because she had refused to satisfy my extravagant demands. It seems as if our machine is set on hatred and not love.

TEACHER.—I am glad that you are able to see your own faults. He is blessed who sees his part of the mistake and gets humble, for, on that lies our way to sweet ties and sweet relationships.

A STUDENT.—How does a man harbour low-hate towards animals or other living and non-living objects ?

TEACHER.—Have you not marked that a person who wishes to write better and finds his nib not working according to his wishes, gets angry and breaks the nib or throws away the pen itself ? Have you not observed a person striking shoes against a lock which does not open by the key that he uses ? Have you not observed a student flinging a book to a distance, because he finds it difficult to understand ?

A person who was worried with studies and was sighing for the day when he would complete his examination and thus be rid of the books, actually arranged the books in a row on the floor of his room and then took up his shoes and went on striking at each book, saying "After all I am rid of you tyrants."

A STUDENT.—The low feeling, Sir, really makes a person insane.

TEACHER.—It does. Have you not observed that a child who has had a stumble or fall while at play, is gratified only when the object—a cot, a stool, a chair, or a table, etc.—which has been the cause of his fall and unconscious obstruction to his play, is actually beaten by the elders. I saw a man getting simply furious with a tree because by a gust of wind the branch of that tree struck him on his face while he was going his way. I have observed men abusing the railway train by which they travelled because it moved slowly, the river because its flood damaged the way, the storm because it felled the tree right on the track and the train had to stop; the bullock or some other animal which obstructed the way and got cut into pieces which caused the train to delay.

A STUDENT.—Do animals also get the fits of low-hate?

TEACHER.—Yes, they do. Here in this town a case was reported of a camel who was once obstructed by his master in his wish to mate with his female. From that time the attitude of the camel was observed to be full of venom. The master was advised either to sell this camel or never to ride it alone. The master observed the second caution for some time, till one day a serious call made him to neglect it. He went on camel ride and never returned. His son suspected that something had gone wrong. He, therefore, went on the back of his beloved horse with a gun. He found at last his father's dead body lying at some distance with camel sitting nearby. He shot the camel dead and found how his father was mauled and crushed by the brute.

A STUDENT.—This is terrible, Sir.

TEACHER.—Indeed, it is so.

## LOW-HATE DUE TO SOCIAL ATTACHMENTS

TEACHER.—Yesterday I dealt with one form of low-hate. Let me today deal with its second form. This form appears when a man feels bound by the tie of any low-love with any of his close relations or a group and thus develops bias or pre-judice in favour of them.

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly explain it ?

TEACHER.—Yes, by all means. When a person develops attachment on the basis of low-loves for his own self or any of the members of his family or his social group, or creed or country, he becomes so irrationally prejudiced in their favour that he is not able to bear any other person exposing even the true defects, lapses, degrading courses of conduct or faults of any one of these loved persons or objects. When he hears somebody doing so, his developed self-love or low-love for his loved ones, receives a deep shock and generates in his heart the septic poison of low-hate.

A STUDENT.—Kindly illustrate it by examples.

TEACHER.—Recently, I read a true story of an alligator whose child was shot dead by a farmer. The mother alligator got simply furious. Next day she kept in hiding near the highway which led to his farm in order to avenge herself. The faithful dog of the farmer scented this danger for the master, and tried to obstruct his going there. The master pushed the dog away. The dog finding no effective way of convincing his master of the danger that lay in his way, determined to sacrifice himself. He, therefore, jumped into the marshy ground. The alligator came out of her hiding and leapt over the prey. It was then that the farmer realized the danger that had faced him. Here the mother's love for the child led her to take its revenge.

A STUDENT.—There is nothing objectionable in this

case. The farmer had done a real injury and he deserved punishment.

TEACHER.—He did deserve it. I gave the above instance to show how our biases fill us with low-hate when the object of our bias is harmed. Let me give you now the examples of cases when justice lies the other way.

I know of the case of a young bachelor who was offered the hand of a good and beautiful girl. This young man was very much self-conceited. He received many offers and therefore went into the mood of a critic. To the father of this particular girl, he sent a word that because the girl walked as if she had a hump on her back, he could not accept the offer. This criticism of his beloved daughter by the young man, so deeply shocked the father that not only he grew indignant but for years thereafter, he never forgave that youngman. He resolved that no girl of his family should ever marry in that family. He kept that pledge.

There was another girl who carried on correspondence with an unmarried boy against the wishes of her parents. This correspondence came into the hands of a relative of the boy. He took it to the girl's father who felt grateful to him. He was advised by the father to take the correspondence to the girl's mother. But here the experience of the messenger was the bitterest. The mother simply got enraged and began foolishly to defend her daughter in the face of the letters. "My daughter can never write a letter to an unmarried boy," she thundered. "But why not look into these letter, madam?" challenged the messenger. But he met with an iron-wall. For years together that messenger was viewed with hatred by the mother. This is because she was bound with her daughter by low-love.

There was a mother whose son committed theft in a shop. Immediately, the shop-keeper detected the theft and ran after the boy. There were others also who ran after the boy. The boy entered his house and his mother, in fury, came out and hurled a volley of abuses on the pursuers that they should have dared to charge her boy with theft who was honesty personified. She behaved thus, even when she knew that her son was a thief. Instead of hating the son, she hated the injured man.

A very curious case came in my experience. A young student was molesting some girls. The girls complained to me. I



asked them to show me the boy. One day, they went for a walk in a garden adjacent to our college. He began to cut indecent verbal jokes. One girl ran to me and said that the molestor was present in the garden. The wicked boy somehow got the scent that the report was made to me. However, some of my own students ran towards the garden to catch the boy. The boy took to heels. My boys pursued him and he entered a house. Fearing the worst, I called my boys back. Next day, the boy's father came to me and you will be surprised to know that the man, instead of feeling ashamed of his dark-dyed son, took up a revolting attitude of injured innocence. He said, "How do you know Sir, that, the girls may have seduced my son to this act?" I felt deeply pained. I said, "Now I can see that a boy who has a father like you cannot but behave in the ugly manner he has behaved. I wish your daughter had been molested and I would have then seen how you could have tolerated anybody telling you what you are saying against the daughters of persons whose shoes you could not buckle." I had to dismiss the man. This is how insanity dominates over those whose beloved objects are exposed, even though rightly.

A STUDENT.—Such a weakness, Sir, is destructive of all sense of justice and fair dealing.

TEACHER.—It is so. This is why justice simply rules the world unchecked.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly give illustrations of how self-love develops this form of low-hate in man.

TEACHER.—Only a few days back, the girls of an institution complained that their articles were missing. The maid-servant who cooked food for them was suspected. Her trunk was opened and some of her things searched. Several things were found which belonged to the girls. There were utensils bearing the names of the girls. The thief stood unabashed. She went to the extent of saying that her deceased husband had left all those things for her, when her husband had passed away before, perhaps the girls whose names were inscribed on the utensils, were born. She began to hate every one of the girls who had complained against her, the authorities and all those who had even an indirect hand in exposing her. She is abusing all others but not her wicked self. This is because she loves her dirty self and all it is made of.

A STUDENT.—How is moral life possible when this is the mentality of the ordinary man and woman ?

TEACHER.—This is why morality is at such a great discount.

In my career as a teacher, I have come across several cases of this kind. There was a wicked boy. He was molesting a handsome young boy. A responsible person reported the matter to me. I had to reprimand the wicked boy. I watched the career of the wicked boy. He became a ruthless enemy of my informant. One of the friends of this wicked boy who was attached to him continued the heritage of hostilities. In various ways the wicked boy and his friend tried to harm my informant. Both have left the college. But I feel that till the last day of their life on this earth they would harbour and feed fat their spirit of low-hate for him. Instead of being ashamed of his base conduct, the wicked boy began to hate one who exposed his sinful life for saving a boy from his wicked overtures.

There was one notorious man who pursued a young girl with his base intentions. He continued to molest her for months, when a public worker approached the authorities. The mother of the girl at last filed a complaint and the most trustworthy witness was the public worker. When the notorious person found that a great public worker was prepared to give true evidence against him, he began to abuse him. He put offensive questions to the public worker when he was in the witness-box. He led his whole attack on this public worker. But all his efforts proved abortive. He was convicted. He appealed. His appeal was rejected. Then this notorious man began his virulent anonymous attacks against that public worker, his assistants and his institution. The low-hate that surged in the heart of the notorious man, because his crime has been brought home to him, continued to make him wish evil and do evil to the public worker.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly illustrate how low attachment for a group, creed or country fills a man's heart with low-hate ?

TEACHER.—This you can see in elections. Those who support one candidate hate any person who refuses to vote for their friend and gives his vote to another candidate. I know of several painful cases when marriages have been wrecked at the altar of this low-attachment. A son-in-law asked his father-

in-law to give up support to his life-long friend in favour of the candidate whom he (the son-in-law) supported. The father-in-law was quite in the right in his refusal, as the friend whom he supported was really a better man. The daughter also supported her father. The result was disastrous. The son-in-law gave up all connections with his wife and her father and married another woman.

A STUDENT.—How tragic, Sir!

TEACHER.—Low attachment for creed and consequent low-hate due to it, can be evident from the following true happening. A society following one and the same creed was split up into two sections which became deadly hostile to each other. One highly educated man belonged to one section. He had a daughter. His wife betrothed the daughter to a fine young man who belonged to the other sect of the same creed. I personally know how this led to domestic rift which was never healed up. The bridegroom was in every way a qualified match for the girl. The girl simply worshipped her fiancé. But the father, led by creed bias, hated the match and when he was not able to break it, he broke the harmony of his own home.

One day a Pathan following a new Muslim sect told me that he loved his niece more than his own begotten child. She died. Since she did not believe in his creed, he considered it a sin to pray by her bier. In another case the sons embraced the new cult. When their father died, they refused to pray for the father, and like strangers, let others take away the bier and perform last services. This is how low-hate based upon creed bias poisons the sweetest ties.

A STUDENT.—All this is deplorable!

TEACHER.—Indeed it is. How a bias for country can poison a man with low-hate is evident these days. The bias for one's country has given us hostile nations which are ready to fly at one another's throat for the sake of their country. There is no question of right or wrong. "My country—right or wrong" is their motto.

The creed-bias has led to Hindu-Muslim riots.

All these biases generate the venom of low-hate which extinguishes all sense of justice and fair-play and all considerations of humanity.

## LOW-HATE DUE TO SELF-LOVE

TEACHER.—Let me today deal with the third form of low-hate.

When a man gets so morally diseased that he is not able to bear, and is shocked, if any person is believed, declared, understood, or shown as superior to him, when in fact he is his superior, he naturally feels hatred for that person.

A STUDENT.—How insane is such a condition of heart !

TEACHER.—Low-hate can never develop in a sane heart. It is a product of soul-disease.

A STUDENT.—Would you please illustrate it?

TEACHER.—In several competitive tests this attitude comes into play. One day there was a baby show. Best prizes were given to some three babies. The ladies had returned with their babies from the show and I casually heard their remarks against the winning babies and their mothers. All of them had returned disappointed and hence they were pouring out the vials of their poisoned mind against not only the winning babies and their mothers but even the judges. Darkest slanders were being loudly uttered. It was a sight of egoistic souls gone insane.

I have witnessed similar scenes on the occasion of Prize Distributions. Once I found a boy of my college talking glibly against the judge. I called him. I enquired as to what was his complaint. He said, "Sir, most of the prizes have been given to the relation of the judge." I knew the winner and I therefore asked that boy, "Did he win in the open matches or not" ? The boy felt hesitant, but his generated low-hate again incited him to say, "But, Sir, why should so many prizes go to the relation of the judge ?" I knew what the boy was suffering from. I did not want to waste time in arguments. I merely confronted him with a telling fact, "Do you know that the winner or his ancestors are not even most remotely

related to the judge of the games? The winner does not belong even to his village." This naturally took the wind out of his sails.

There were two girls at the top in a school. But these two rivals were so situated that one was always first and the other always second. This difference was a gall and worm to the second girl. One day, out of the spite generated by low-hate for the first girl, the second girl went to the former's room when she was absent and took some of her exercise books containing notes and threw them in a well. This is how she wanted to satisfy her poisoned soul.

A college student gave his experience thus. He had passed B.A. and was preparing for some higher test. Another boy of his place appeared for Intermediate Arts and got first division. He was the only boy of that place to get first division in any college examination. The boy was being praised all around. This graduate, who was not his rival in any sense, was so severely shocked, because the other boy was being praised, that for nearly a week he used to roll in his bed in agony—all this because another was being praised and not he, though the praise was well-deserved.

He was an M.A. He requested a benefactor of his—a journalist—to give him some book to translate. This journalist gave a vernacular book to him. But he also gave one copy to another M.A. for the same purpose. When the translations were received by the journalist, he accepted the one made by the latter M.A. and rejected the translation of the former. This former one went and asked the journalist as to why he had done so. The journalist told him a bit frankly that his translation was much too inferior to the other one. Now, because the journalist praised the other M.A. in the presence of the first one, the latter hated not only the former but even the journalist and thereafter never kept any such literary contact with him.

**A STUDENT.**—The above instances disclose a very rotten condition of the heart of even some of the highly educated persons.

**TEACHER.**—As even highly educated persons contract physical diseases, so do they contract moral and spiritual diseases. As they need a medical man to tackle with their

physical maladies, so do they need some great moral soul to tackle with their soul-diseases.

A STUDENT.—Indeed so.

TEACHER.—It is said that when Columbus discovered America and received the well-deserved praises from all around, there were lots of persons who could not bear the encomiums that were being lavished on him. They circulated lots of slanders against him, one of them being that the task he had achieved, was in no way singular and that any sailor could achieve that. Columbus, it is said, wanted to explode this lie. So he summoned a large gathering and in that big congregation, he placed an egg on the table. He then challenged any one present to make the egg stand on an end. All made attempts but failed. Columbus was then asked to do the 'impossible' work. Columbus took the egg and with a force struck it on the surface of the table. It broke but it stood on its end. The congregation shouted that any one could make the egg stand like that. Columbus smiled and said, "The honour goes to him whom it occurs first." By this he, no doubt, defeated his detractors but he could not save them from the hell-fire of their low-hate.

One gentleman made a great speech in a big gathering which was highly appreciated by the public. There was a tea function immediately after that. The guests began to sing praises of the speaker. A medical graduate who was also a guest could not bear the speaker being praised. He felt shocked and burst out, "Men, why are you belauding him to the skies. I know him intimately. He is simply a hobbler who has command over words—same words—which he speaks on every occasion." Some of those sitting near him, felt amused at his insane outburst. But he could not help making a fool of himself.

Our college has established its reputation for university results, cultural atmosphere and moral atmosphere. There are hundreds who praise the institution. This praise offends many. These offended persons get filled with hate and circulate slanders. The latest and most abominable slander circulated by them is that the college makes bogus payments to its professors giving them less and getting receipts for more. This slander they circulated so insidiously and cunningly that it is gradually permeated into higher circles. We had to contradict this

loathsome lie of such persons. This form of low-hate is simply horrible.

A STUDENT.—Indeed, it is horrible.

TEACHER.—This morbid attitude is shown not only in impersonal and formal relations. It works havoc even among close relatives and friends. The head of an institution got a colleague of his dismissed on a false charge, because the colleague had become so popular that every body used to praise him—the students, their parents and others. The wife of an advocate compelled her husband to drive out his mother when he wished her to live with him. The advocate doted on his wife and had to obey her. The only fault of the mother lay in this that the son often praised her in his wife's presence and preferred to be led by her counsels more than those of his wife. Only recently I read that a wife compelled her husband to part with his animal friend, his pet, and send him to Zoo, because he had the nerve to express that the pet served him and loved him as none did. This expression of opinion, the wife wanted only for herself. It was a taboo for her husband to shower that praise even on a dumb animal. A widow once wrote a pathetic story of the tragedy of her life. Her husband had brotherly love for a girl before he fell in love with the woman he married, i.e., the widow of our story. He had informed his wife about his deep brotherly love for the girl before he entered into wedlock with her. He prayed to her to let him continue that friendship with her. The woman promised. But soon after marriage, she could not bear her husband praising his adopted sister. She made such a hell of his life that he gave up all talk with his sister. But gradually he grew sullen and morose. The wife saw the danger. She at once recovered her sanity of heart and permitted her husband to call his sister to their house. The girl came. One evening, the brother and the sister went for a walk and lost their way. It was very late when they returned. The wife rebuked her husband in scathing terms, even doubting his loyalty to her. He felt shocked. In order to escape the tyranny of her presence, he got into his car and drove it at neck-break speed when all at once it skedaddled, turned turtle and went into a ditch. He was instantly dead. His dead body was brought to her.

Yes, she was jealous also. She could not bear that her

husband should consider another better than herself in any way. The victim of this form of low-hate cannot bear that anybody should be considered better than himself. I saw one sister not being able to bear her other sister's being considered more fortunate or wiser or better than herself. She used to get the poison of low-hate. One uncle hated his nephew because he was publicly honoured and his own son was ignored. He wanted all praise for himself and his children and not even for his brother's children. I saw a life-long chum of a man always feeling shocked when his friend won honour and applause and he would try to belittle him and create adverse opinion about him wherever he could.

A STUDENT.—Is man meant for misery alone that he converts even sweetest ties into miserable and poisoned ones?

TEACHER.—Low-loves and low-hates work that havoc.

In the political world, this form of low-hate assumes great dimensions. In Punjab, Lala Lajpat Rai's name is a name to be conjured with respect. He had all-India fame. His fame spread even beyond the borders of India. It is a settled conviction of the politically-minded India that Lala Lajpat Rai stood unrivalled in the Punjab. And yet, about 19 or 20 years ago, a rising politician whom prison life brought to the public notice, came out of jail. At several places congregational meetings were held to greet him. I happened to be present at the place where he was being honoured. I went to see him. In the course of conversation, I happened to talk of Lala Lajpat Rai and his great sacrifices. I was shocked to hear this rising man suddenly interrupt me, by saying, "You people make much of Lalaji's sacrifices. Others have not suffered less." In that tone he talked for some time. Upto this day, I have not forgotten the man's fury at what was an innocent mention of Lalaji's virtues and sacrifices. That man could not bear even Lalaji being praised in his presence.

The unhappy state of affairs in Congress circles in our province would, when analysed, reveal the working of low-hate in various forms. Blind to soul-life, even the enlightened politicians cannot trace their troubles to right psychological causes.

In the so-called religious world, the same malady manifests itself. When one leader is being praised the other so-called



leaders get shocked and there is schism. There is war of bitterest possible words. Abuses are hurled at the head of the belauded leader.

In the social reform world, if any brave soul leads the campaign against any social evil and sets a heroic example of some reform and there is chorus of praise sung for him, we find a number of persons who at once come forward to vilify him. Their hearts get a wound because he is praised. They begin to hate him. This is why the path of great service is always considered as a bed of thorns.

In fact, when a man goes into the insane attitude of wishing all praise for himself and wishing none else to be believed, considered, declared or shown as superior to him, even when the latter is in fact superior to him, he is filled with low-hate. This low-hate drives him to wish evil to the innocent object of his low-hate. It is necessary to get the unique light to see the horror of this feeling and the unique power to get freedom from it.

## LOW-HATE DUE TO RELIGIOUS BIAS

TEACHER.—I have given you talks on three forms of this hellish feeling called low-hate. Let me deal with the fourth and last form.

When a person loves any false religious creed or entertains false beliefs or wrong conventions, traditions or customs or clings to any of his opinions, he develops a sort of attachment or bias for it. Dominated by this bias,

- (a) he harbours low-hate against an individual or group, because he finds them as non-believers in his faith or creed ;
- (b) he develops low-hate against any person whom he finds differing from him in dress, fashions, mode of life, language, etc.;
- (c) he cherishes low-hate against any person whom he finds inferior to himself; and
- (d) he hates a person because of his particular profession, or his colour, caste, etc.

A STUDENT.—Sir, this form of low-hate takes in its sweep very large number of human weaknesses. I would request you to illustrate the truth of these from everyday human life.

TEACHER.—I deal with the first. Here you will find that this sort of low-hate takes the form of religious fanaticism or bigotry. More sins can be traced to the door of this hate than to any other form.

Why was Christ crucified ? It is because his message struck the orthodox as new. Millions of his followers were persecuted and even put to death for no other offence but difference of faith.

All these unjust persecutions which the Christians suffered

did not make them tolerant towards others. In their own turn, Christians behaved as inhumanly towards others as their persecutors did. When Protestantism came into existence, these very Christians imitated and perhaps excelled their persecutors. Christian Protestants were tortured in the most inhuman ways. They were burnt alive, guillotined, quartered (three limbs broken on a torture machine) and mercilessly butchered. The most savage institution of inquisition was set in motion. It was such a monstrous institution that it has earned for its authors and workers an eternal shame. Protestants too did not learn the shame of persecution by their personal experience. They imitated their persecutors in more than one way.

Then came Islam. The founder of Islam was driven out of his dear native soil. His followers were subjected to all kinds of indignities. Even wars were fought. But did that leave Muslims wiser? In their turn, they behaved far worse than their persecutors. When Bahauulla and his predecessor came to preach a new gospel, Persian Muslim divines persecuted these truly non-violent and most innocent people. It is said that thirty thousand Bahais were put to death. Their death cried shame on the persecutors and has earned them eternal disgrace.

A STUDENT.—I am astonished at this phase of a fanatic's life. Does he not gain even by his own bitter experience?

TEACHER.—He does not, because he is insane. The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Guru Arjan Dev and other Sikh men and women by the Muslim kings is a matter of record of our own history. The Sikh militia—the bravest in the world—was the direct outcome of those persecutions. What surprises me also is, that in the face of the fact that their own faith flourished as persecutions grew, they entertain a belief that by persecution, they would crush any other faith. Blood of martyrs is the most fertile source for the growth of the persecuted faith. Thus neither a fanatic grows merciful to others when in his own case, he hates cruelty practised on him, nor he learns from the history of his own creed that persecution fans to flame the enthusiasm and sacrifice of another creed.

A STUDENT.—Are there other lessons also which are wasted on a fanatic?

TEACHER.—If there is anybody more enthusiastic than any

other on a platform speaking in favour of tolerance, it is the fanatic. When he talks of need for tolerance, he wants tolerance for his own creed and not for others. A Muslim called his religion the "religion of peace". It never occurred to him that from the very start of Islam, peace on several occasions was denied to others. Khalifa Abubakar sent an army to bring back to Islam those tribes which disowned Islam after the death of the Founder. Recently, Bahais have been butchered in thousands. The Christians call their Lord as the "prince of peace", but it were they who started inquisition and carried on crusade against Muslims for nearly two hundred years! The fanatic cries for peace but all that is meant for his own benefit; and he ruthlessly denies it to others. The lesson is lost on a fanatic. The fanatic abhors those who loot him or take away his women in the interests of their religion. But, in his own turn, he plunders the non-believers and seduces or abducts their women.

The fanatic wants full exercise of his religious observances. But he would deny it to others. A Muslim would like to have a mosque for himself but he won't let a Hindu build a temple. A Muslim is anxious to take back a mosque now in possession of another creed, but he would never return to Hindus their temple which he has converted into a mosque.

A fanatic desires perfect liberty for himself to convert others to his faith, but he would get simply insane if his creed brothers are converted to another faith. A muslim is an enthusiastic proselytizer but he simply revolts against anybody converting a Muslim to Hindu faith.

A fanatic wants full liberty to take animal life for food but he would revolt against a Hindu enforcing vegetarianism in his own Hindu institution, when according to that Hindu's faith, animal flesh for food is not permissible. A fanatic wants all freedom for himself and allows no freedom to others.

A fanatic wants full liberty to criticize the founders and leaders of other faiths, but he would go to the extent of cowardly putting to death any person who criticizes the founder of his creed.

The fanatic claims the right to preach to the world that so-called prophet or guide is perfect but he denies that right to the whole humanity. A Qadiani asserts his right to declare

that the founder of his faith is a prophet but he grows indignant when Bahais assert that Bahauulla is the prophet of the age.

A fanatic asserts his right to say that his so-called scripture is a revealed book, but he gets furious if any other person asserts his right to say that his belief in a certain revealed book is a wrong belief.

A fanatic asserts his right to condemn all non-believers in his faith as *kaffirs* or apostate, but he gets mad if in his own turn, he is called *kaffir* or apostate by those in whose faith he does not believe.

These and various other lessons are lost on a fanatic.

A STUDENT.—To be a religious fanatic then, Sir, is a blighting misfortune for man.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. A religious fanatic who hates non-believers is less of a human being and more of a man-tearing animal.

A STUDENT.—How does, then, a fanatic who hates non-believers, give consolation to his heart that thereby he is serving his faith and securing a place in heavens ?

TEACHER.—It is an illusion wrought by the fancy of the deluded fanatic. As he is a fool, who tears his eyes out in the hope of having four eyes in heaven, in the same way, he who destroys all sense of discrimination, justice and humanity by low-hate and yet believes in a heavenly life for himself is a perfect fool. Heavenly life is produced by higher loves and destroyed by lower hates.

A STUDENT.—Why is fanaticism, Sir, so widespread among the followers of various religious sects ?

TEACHER.—This is due to the teachings of various faiths. When the followers of a particular creed are taught that those who believe shall be saved and those who believe not shall be damned, they would naturally feel the non-believer as an apostate and object of hate. In the same way, when another creed teaches that non-believers are *kaffirs* or *mlecch* and shall be put in hell, its believers would also condemn non-believers and hate them. When the so-called God is said to hate a non-believer, a follower cannot be better than his God. Whenever blind faith is emphasised and noble life discounted, false values would be attached to mere belief and the non-believer would be looked down upon as an object of aversion.

A STUDENT.—Have you got personal experience of the existence of low-hate in others ?

TEACHER.—I have. Our cult does not believe in any supernatural being. We believe that all is Nature and life of soul is as much subject to facts and laws of Nature as the physical body of man. Only because we teach this, we have been subjected to untold persecutions.

A STUDENT.—For mere difference of faith, you are hated ! This is strange ! Difference of faith is not a new thing. Such a difference has existed from the dawn of civilization. If we were to hate each other for difference of beliefs, there could be no peace on earth.

A STUDENT.—This is why there is no peace on earth. All that matters in our daily life is our behaviour towards others. If that is good and splendid, nothing more is wanted.

TEACHER.—Behaviour or conduct is taken as the least important factor by a fanatic. A great Muslim leader once openly said in a congregational meeting that a wicked Muslim was better in his eyes than Mahatma Gandhi. Such is the perverted vision of a fanatic.

A STUDENT.—How can noble life be valued when fanatic's philosophy is so crude ?

TEACHER.—In our society, no one is admitted as member of the Dev Samaj unless he abjures and permanently refrains from gambling, bribes-taking, adultery, use of all intoxicants, theft, suppression of debts and deposits, flesh eating, etc. This gives one some good and stable character. Thereafter, he is trained to develop higher life. He becomes more and more serviceable. And yet this noble life is all depreciated by an average theist—because we do not believe in the existence of any supernatural being.

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly illustrate it ?

TEACHER.—Yes. A young man was given to hard drinking and gambling. He used to get Rs. 5 or more for his pocket expenses. One day, he came under the influence of the Dev Samaj and underwent higher change. He gave up drinking and gambling and bad society. All this change came as a great surprise to his acquaintances. There were persons who respected Dev Samaj for this. But the fanatics in the boy's own family began persecuting him. After some months they

succeeded in their unholy attempt and felt relieved. The boy reverted to his old life and in course of time became a pauper and was found in streets lying dead drunk. The boy's ruined life was due to the fanatics' frenzy.

There was another youngman whose life was very filthy. He came under the influence of the Dev Samaj. He changed. For some years, his life was a model in his family. Once his brothers were prevailed upon by their wives to send them to Hardwar. They did not trust each other. But they agreed to send their wives under the guardianship of that Dev Samajist brother. His castemen trusted him. But fanatics in his family still believed the man lost because he was a Dev Samajist and did not believe in God. His father and others at last cut him off from the Dev Samaj. His life thereafter was reprehensible. He lost all trust which his former character had won for him. One day I found him drunk. His life was wrecked but the fanatics' heart was relieved that he was no longer a Dev Samajist.

There was a Jat Sikh given to various kinds of vices. He drank hard and committed various sins and crimes. He came under the influence of the Dev Samaj. He changed wonderfully. He gave up the eight sins and developed love and respect for his parents and became diligent and economical. Within a short time, his life proved a great blessing. The changed life of the youngman spread holy influences all around, but his association with the Dev Samaj was viewed with hatred by some. The youngman was cut off. He drifted to his old life. He went to the extent of abducting a girl of another family. In order to involve the parents and relations of the abducted girl, he murdered his own father and reported to the police that the girl's relations had killed him. The real facts became known. He was convicted to penal servitude. He lost his eyes in jail. The fanatics cut him off from the Dev Samaj but could not help him away from his degradation. This was another case of a ruined life due to the fanatics' attempts.

These can be multiplied.

A STUDENT.—The fanatic is a dog in the manger. He neither helps a man in his life, nor lets others help him.

TEACHER.—When the history of fanaticism comes to be separately written, it shall show the havocs wrought by low-hate generated in the heart of a fanatic.

## LOW-HATE DUE TO DIFFERENCES IN MODES OF LIFE

TEACHER.—I have given you in brief the horrors of fanaticism which is nothing but low-hate developed in the heart of a man who is attached to certain beliefs, however false they may be, and who receives shock because he finds another a non-believer in his faith. Let me deal with remaining sub-forms of this fourth kind of low-hate.

A STUDENT.—I can understand fanaticism as intensity of emotion in matters religious which produces an insane attachment to a faith. But why should a man hate another because of difference in dress, mode of life, language etc.?

TEACHER.—Why a man does so is due to the fact that he develops strong attachment to his own dress, his own fashions, his own mode of life, his own language etc. It is because another differs from him, his low-love receives a shock and he begins to have toxins of low-hate.

When I first came to Punjab, I met a strange experience. My wife dressed in the fashions of her own province of Sindh and the Punjabi ladies living nearby began to ridicule her and to express their hatred for her dress. I told these ladies that they were perhaps unaware of the fact that their dress appeared to us as ridiculous. This came to them as a surprise. They had, because of their attachment, come to believe their mode of dress as the ideal one. Hence, when they were told that their dress appeared to our ladies as ridiculous, they grew indignant. When they grew indignant, I told them that in the same way we felt indignant when they ridiculed our dress. But, like a religious fanatic, who demands all tolerance from the world but in his own case denies it to others, these fanatics also want the world to praise their dress and mode of life, but have nothing but condemnation for others. This is how low-hate perverts human vision.



A STUDENT.—The more we learn about this, the greater is our surprise that humanity does not awaken to the horrors of such heart-forces.

TEACHER.—Once three or four persons having different languages were talking about the beauties and defects of languages. It was significant that every one of them cried down other language save his own. Every one would call his own language sweet and other's as jarring upon his nerves. This is why we have provincial rivalries. Men of one language feel their kinship. They feel strangers to men having other languages. This weakness of man is being fed fat today by our own countrymen. They want not only provincial governments for men following the same language but even separate universities. They want cultural isolation, little realizing that all this would lead to rivalries due to narrow outlook on life.

A STUDENT.—But it is strange that a man should hate another because he thinks that another man is inferior to him.

TEACHER.—I came across a case early in life which came to me as a surprise. A young man used to treat with contempt another young man. I asked the former as to why he hated the latter. He said unabashed, "He is a weakling". The whip of sarcasm and contempt, which he applied to the 'weakling' so exasperated him and made him so desperate that he began to kick all around indiscriminately. That youngman throughout his life has suffered from this low-hate. He was filled with hate for even a great man because he did not come up to his standard of dress.

I found another person hating bitterly a poor man who was his subordinate because he did not come up to his standard.

Wherever bullies flourish there must be cowards. Bullies not only hate cowards but hurt them also.

I saw a father feeling contempt for his own girl-child because she was inoffensive and not able to assert herself, while he loved another who had self-reliance, self-confidence and self-assertion.

A weak and helpless wife has often become the object of contempt and victim of cruelty for a husband suffering from this kind of low-hate.

Indians were for a long time objects of contempt to foreigners because they, Hindus especially, were weak.

The contempt which we find in an average Muslim for an average Hindu is due to this.

In fact, inferiority seems to be a crime.

A STUDENT.—And yet, Sir, it is this inferiority of another which has given to some men an understanding and sympathetic heart.

TEACHER.—The brave and the generous feel motherly affection for the weak, helpless or inferior. But when mean animal spirit dominates over a man, he kicks those who lick him and licks those who kick him.

A STUDENT.—What are other forms of this insane feeling ?

TEACHER.—They are many and various. In fact, it seems mankind has fallen in love with the basest of human feelings.

A man hates another because of his profession. We know that none of us can do without a trusted servant. And yet the servant is called a menial. There was one such woman who was a trusted servant of a big family. Her daughter had qualified herself and was enjoying a respectable job. But the fact of her mother being a servant, clung to her disfavour. In her office, one day, a young beautiful handsome man was attracted to the girl. In course of time, he lost his heart to her. The girl knew what a wall stood between them. Hence when he proposed marriage to her, she did not commit herself. After some time the young man grew persistent and then she revealed to him the name of her mother who followed a menial profession. This cooled the ardour of the young man and his love grew frozen. She, therefore, married another young man who was her playmate from her childhood.

A man hates another because of his class or caste. There is true story of a woman who attracted a young man belonging to a higher society or class. The society papers talked of him. The girl warned him that as she did not belong to his society, his society would boycott him. But he was obdurate. He married her. But the boycott of his people was so complete that he began to grow despondent. The girl whom he loved intensely, could not help him out of the gloom. After some time, she felt that the boycott would tell on her husband's life. Hence she determined to give him freedom. She found peace only when she had cut herself off from him completely,

so that he could get a divorce decree and marry a girl of his class.

Once a young man was put to death because he married outside his caste. This low-hate rules Hindus as a rule. Once an advocate came to me to enquire about some match for his daughter. He was a *Bania* by caste. I told him if he would like to see a *Kshatrya* boy. He pointedly said "No". What if your daughter marries a *Kshatrya*?" I said. Forthwith he replied, "I would shoot her dead."

There was a lady who actually married her daughter to a man of her caste who was a simple Matriculate and rejected the offer of an M.A. because he belonged to another caste.

I have found parents destroying the marriage prospects of their children because of low-hate for others. I know of some families who kept their girls unmarried for whole life because in their own caste they were not able to get an eligible match. In other castes, they could have had very good boys. But that step they could not take, because of this low-hate for castes other than their own.

In my caste, I found when I was young and living in my town, a number of families vanishing out of existence, because the males were not able to get married owing to paucity of girls.

In the same way, the *Brahmins* who were the priests of our families and castes, were fast dwindling because the boys of their families were not able to get girls of their own small *Brahminical* caste. Even girls of other *Brahmin* castes were taboo to them.

I met a family in a village which was very well-to-do but out of six brothers in it only one was married. I asked one of them why they did not marry outside their caste when their own caste could not provide them with matches. The man grew red hot and said, "Do you mean to tell me that I should apply an iron nail on a golden plate". He compared other castes to iron and his own caste to gold. The brothers lived and died as bachelors but they did not like to marry from other castes even when they were actually offered girls from them.

This low-love of caste not only deprives millions of a chance of marriage or a happy marriage but it disintegrates a whole

nation into water-tight groups always feeling themselves aliens to other groups. The low-hate due to colour or caste has produced negro and sudra problems in America and India, respectively, with results which are sickening.

## ANTIDOTE TO LOW-HATE—HIGHER LOVE

A STUDENT.—Sir, the picture that you have drawn of low-hate has deeply impressed us all. Low-hate indeed is a hellish force. Is there no antidote to it ?

TEACHER.—*Every higher love is an antidote to its corresponding low-love or low-hate.* There are souls who do not believe that hate is to be met by hate.

I read in a book a story which makes my point clear. Once in one of the States of the New World, a party came into power. The leader of the victorious party was a sworn enemy of the leader of the defeated party. He not only confiscated all his belongings but also set a value on his head. The defeated leader escaped and found a safe shelter in an island he had perhaps previously designed as the place of refuge. Years rolled on. One day his men brought in an unconscious condition a young man who had drifted to the shores of their Island on the raft of a broken ship. The leader and his men nursed the young man to life and health. In delirious condition, the boy had let out a secret and the leader knew that the young man was the son of his inveterate foe who had been the cause of his defeat, disgrace, poverty and exile. As soon as he came to know of this, he cried out, "I am avenged." He served the young man with re-doubled love and energy. When the young man completely recovered, the leader arranged to send him back to his father loaded with all such precious presents as the Island could afford. "Could you not tell me your name and past history," said the young man to the leader, "I must compensate you for the wonderful love and care bestowed on me, as my father is a great man." "I will be amply paid," returned the leader, "if you deliver my letter to your father. He knew me under different circumstances."

Great were the rejoicings with which the State resounded

when the news of the safe return of the lost child of the leader was wafted all around. "And who was that benefactor," asked the father to his son, "who had laid me under this deep debt of obligation?" The boy said, "He has given me a letter for you. He said you knew him under different circumstances."

The father tore open the letter and began to shake as if with ague when he had perused the contents. It is said that he also broke into sobs. Immediately he ordered that ships should set sail to bring the exiled leader back to his home with all the military honours due to his former position. It was a sight to see, this old veteran leader embarking his benefactor and expressing how the noble return on his part had cried shame on him as nothing else could have done.

Thus by returning hate with love, two life-long enemies became best of friends.

A STUDENT.—Such a conduct is most splendid !

TEACHER.—It is so.

A STUDENT.—Do you personally believe in the efficacy of this weapon ?

TEACHER.—I consider it as the most efficacious weapon in dealing with those who have injured me. It is not that I have conquered low-hate. It is a terrible disease. But I have learnt by a long experience extending over 30 years that nothing else pays so well.

In the town where I practised as an advocate. I was in charge of my Samaj work. Theists of several denominations used to collect there every week to denounce our cause and create hatred for us all. This poisonous propaganda went on for months. Naturally, some persons lost their head. One of these persecutors of our cause fell ill. In our society at that time there was a doctor. We had all come to a settled rule of our conduct that whenever possible, we should return the evil by a good turn. When that persecutor fell ill, he sent somebody to that Dev Samaj doctor. Our enemies do abuse and malign us, but in the hour of trouble, they come to many of us. As soon as the doctor came to know that that bad man had fallen ill, he considered it an opportunity. He went to him. He was with him the whole night fighting with his serious malady. It was only before day-break that he

could safely leave the patient. He charged him nothing. The result, as expected, was marvellous. He turned into our great friend.

A STUDENT.—Kindly give us more instances.

TEACHER.—When this college was started, we had very few students on rolls and still fewer in the hostel. We in the hostel had decided to take duties if any student fell ill. I also took a share of duties. There was one student who would never co-operate with us. The boys naturally hated him. One day that student fell ill. A student came running to me and said, "Sir, we must now set him right by ignoring him altogether." These students had a reason to ignore him. But that would never have sweetened the relations. I told them, "Consider this as an opportunity to convert him. Show him by your service that his selfishness was not a good act". The young boys—generous as they are—divided duties for night and day and served him whole-heartedly for seven days till he was cured. One day he came to the class when I was teaching and said with moistened eyes, "I have come to publicly express my sense of shame for my past selfishness towards my hostel-mates. By their kindness and service they have punished me very effectively. In future, kindly give me the hardest duty."

He kept his word.

A STUDENT.—The students who made such a splendid return deserve congratulations. It is the easiest job in life to hate another. It is indeed heroic to make a good return to those at whose hands one has suffered.

TEACHER.—There was a big man who used to hate us and our institutions including this college. I tried my best to win him over but met with no success. I felt that the only way left to me was to serve him. But I was not able to get an opportunity. Apparently there was no chance for him to need my services. But as good fortune would have it, his daughter needed help in one subject which I taught in the college. He came to me. I pounced upon the chance. I helped the girl for several months. The father was changed for ever. He became one of my best friends and supporters.

In the same way another gentleman used to injure our cause both by pen and word. He was one of our confirmed

enemies. He also came into trouble. Some of our people went to his help. The help was sympathetic and substantial. The result was marvellous. Both his pen and tongue—powerful as they were—were never again used against us. Till he died, he cherished good feelings for our society.

A STUDENT.—Such incidents cannot fail to inspire a faith in us to make a good return for an evil one.

TEACHER.—Once a boy who is now occupying a high job in Government service insulted me openly in the class. To keep discipline, I had to ask him to leave the college premises. The boy came to senses as soon as he left the premises of the college. He kept pacing to and fro on the road outside the college till evening. I came to know of all this. When I was about to take my evening meals, a thought flashed across my mind that the boy would hardly take his meals and would have to sleep for the night without food. This thought disturbed me so much that I could not touch a morsel. I sent for my peon and sent him to the boy with a word that I had forgiven him and he could come to the college without making any apology. After that I took my meals.

Apparently it was not a sensible step. And nobody told me that I should send such messages. But I was helpless in the hands of my feelings.

The result was simply wonderful. On his own initiative, he expressed regret in the class-room. He was thereafter the best loved student. Up to this day when he happens to come here to see his relative, he comes first to me to offer his *parnams* and then goes to anybody else. Is not such a result most heartening and is it not calculated to inspire faith in making a good return for an evil act?

A STUDENT.—Our conviction is growing in the efficacy of this weapon.

TEACHER.—I have made two more experiments which I want to tell you about. A boy of a good family came and joined my college. He was in chronic need of money. He came and appealed to me that I should give him some room to live in as there was no vacancy in the hostel. I give him a room just near my office. One day, a guest came. I had to provide him with bedding. I gave him a beautiful blanket which had cost me a good price. In the morning the guest left. The



only person who lived near my office was the boy whom I had lent the free use of the room. He stole the blanket. I suspected him. He knew I suspected him. He could not return the blanket to me as he had perhaps sold it away. However, he grew very nervous whenever he saw me. I had to make him ashamed of his act. Hence I told my son who was his chum to show more favours to him. I also treated him with kindness. The effect on him was a very happy one. In several other ways, he wanted to compensate me for the blanket he had stolen and to assure me that he was sorry for his weakness. As long as he lived here, he tried in various ways to serve me and my family.

But another case was more definite. One day a young fashionable student came and said, "Sir, can I sit in your office and study here?" I said, "yes". I went to take the class. When I returned, I found him gone and my new book, which I had left on the table in his presence, missing, too. He had also stolen some manuscripts from my drawers. He was one day caught red-handed stealing some books of another boy. He then admitted all thefts. The only punishment that he deserved was rustication from the college. I could have rusticated him. But I held my hand from that act, however just it was. He returned my books to me and paid to others in cash. He was forgiven. He was sent up for the Intermediate Arts and passed. He got a good job. After some years, I was going to Simla when somebody all at once came and kept his head on my feet. I requested him to rise and then I recognised the man. He said, "Sir, you will be happy to know that the man you saved is today a respectable man leading a respectable life. But for your forgiveness, I would have been ruined."

I was happy to see him so well-settled in life.

Low-hate, vindictive punishments and kicking hardly pay. Between hate and love, I believe love to be any time more efficacious than hate.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, is not philosophy of love a philosophy of the weak?

TEACHER.—No, it is not. He is weak who is not able to strike back. But if one who is able to return blow for blow and yet restrains himself and uses another and more difficult weapon of a generous gesture, he is decidedly not only physi-

*cally strong but also morally great.*

A STUDENT.—I do not consider this rule free from certain doubt. I remember a case of a gardener who outraged the modesty of an unmarried girl of a rich man. The rich man had to teach the rascal a lesson. He took the help of several young men of his own community who lay in hiding near a place from where the gardener's wife had to pass. They took hold of her and raped her. Thereafter, the man never dared to commit any such crime.

TEACHER.—This form of punishment of "tooth for tooth and eye for eye" has been in use for ages and stands discredited. But this case opens several issues. An innocent woman—gardener's wife—was treated most brutally. This in itself condemns the spirit of vindictiveness. The second is that if every individual were to take the law into his own hands, as the rich man did, there would be chaos in the world. The third is that the aggrieved party could very reasonably have had recourse to law and got the man his dues. The girl was fully justified in such a case to move the machinery of law. But there is no room for vindictiveness. You perhaps do not know that the tribes who have been following the law of the jungle in their dealings have kept alive for generations the flame of hostility and hundreds of lives have been lost and still peace is not in sight.

Some of the Muslim invaders used to carry away Hindu girls as prizes of war. But when Shivaji laid an example of returning with due honours a Muslim princess to her parents, a new wave was set in motion. Even today the example of Shivaji puts to shame all such invaders who captured women as prizes of war.

Some of the Muslim invaders demolished our temples and destroyed our sacred libraries. Shivaji in his own turn respected their mosques and religious books. That act of his puts to shame those devoid of this clemency.

What you have to see is the total effect on humanising humanity. Love succeeds where low-hate can never succeed.

## ANTIDOTE TO LOW-HATE—BETTER UNDERSTANDING

A STUDENT.—Sir, give us another talk on meeting hate with love or evil with good. The last lecture has done us great good.

TEACHER.—It is said about Jesus Christ that when he was being crucified, he prayed for his enemies thus: "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do."

In the Civil War in America, there were many conscientious objectors who refused to become soldiers. One of these objectors, William Hocket, wrote, "They were ordered by Colonel Kirkland to 'load, present arms, aim' and their guns were pointed at my breast. I raised my arms and prayed, 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' Not a gun was fired. An officer then swore he would ride over me and made every effort to do so but failed, for his horse could not be made to step on me."

Victory without violence ! The last incident of the horse is accidental. But the effect of man's good turn to his enemies had the desired effect. He won without low-hate or force.

A man had dismissed a workman on account of his incorrigible use of bad language. The dismissed employee determined to do harm to his master. The master was warned of this. He, therefore, took another road while going home. That was a safe path. But from a distance he spied his dismissed employee standing behind a tree watching his master's usual way home. Instead of evading the workman, he walked up to him from behind and putting his hand on his shoulder, said "Friend, I think you are looking for me. What is it you want with me?" The man was utterly taken aback by his cordial behaviour and said, "I meant to kill you but now I can't."

The man's character too improved. He became an excellent servant of another master who wondered why such a man could be dismissed. When he learnt that he was dispensed with because of the use of bad language, he said "This is very strange, for I have never heard him use a single bad word."

Thus his entire life was changed by the affectionate behaviour of another.

A STUDENT.—Power of love seems to be very great.

TEACHER.—You know Muslims quote with pride how in the hour of his conquest of Mecca, the Founder of Islam issued universal pardon to all his enemies. This more than anything else paved the way for the conversion of all tribes in Mecca to the faith of Islam.

Once I taught in a text book for Matriculation, a story of a Mohamedan great man. Once the murderer of his first born son, took shelter with him as his guest. The hospitality of this man was known far and wide. He came to know that the guest was the murderer of his son. In the morning, he gave him a good horse and a purse and said, "Please go away before a dark thought should poison my mind." This is how he was afraid of low-hate.

A STUDENT.—This is a splendid conduct of that great man.

TEACHER.—It is. When I was studying in school, I read a story in a text book. A young prince was abused by some boy. The boy was brought before the King and he asked his ministers what punishment they proposed for him. All proposed heavy punishments. When the King heard all of them, he said, "I advise the prince to excuse him completely." This act of the King's clemency naturally calmed down the boiling passions of hate and vindictiveness and a happy and soothing mind of humanity wafted all over his country.

This is how the King treated an evil-doer.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly give some more illustrations of how to deal with sinners?

TEACHER.—It is said that somebody complained to Jesus Christ that a woman had deviated from the path of chastity. The only punishment in those days for such a crime was stoning the culprit to death. The men wanted the woman to receive that extreme form of punishment. Jesus asked them all

to assemble at one place with stones in their hands. They were required to strike her when ordered. The woman took her appointed seat. When all were ready, Jesus said, "Let him strike who is himself sinless." None dared to strike. Jesus brought home a truth to them that those who themselves sin have no right to be harsh to others. They should be generous enough. Often times we are extremely cruel to others because of their lapses when we want all forgiveness for our own lapses.

A STUDENT.—If we could remember this, we shall not be rash to judge and convict others.

TEACHER.—I read in a novel a story which has deeply impressed me. A poor man was driven by poverty to steal. He was in jail for some years. When he came out, he was asked to wear a badge to warn people. He was hungry. And yet every hotel shut its gates in his face. Harassed by hunger, he knocked at the door of a good missionary. The missionary welcomed him, served meals to him in silver utensils and then gave him a comfortable bed to lie down. In the morning, when the missionary got up, the policemen brought this convict and reported to him how the convict had paid his hospitality by robbing him of his silver service. The missionary calmly said, "I intended all these for him to take. They are his with my consent." The convict was set free. This kindest act transformed his life and he became in his own turn a good man.

This convict's life, as I said above, was changed beyond recognition. He became a great industrialist. In his mill worked a young mother, who had a daughter whom she had left with a family. She used to send some decent amount to the family for her maintenance. She had one day to sell her beautiful locks and even agree to get her beautiful teeth extracted in order to have enough money to meet the exorbitant demands of the pair who had sheltered her daughter. One day, this poor mother was expelled from work. She was crying when this good man entered. She knew him to be the owner. When he asked why she cried, she became almost insane and spat on his face, "Take this you cruel monster, who treats us helpless women like this." The man did not mind that and gradually brought her in a mood to reveal her own story to him. Soon after, her broken health gave way. Before she

died, she requested him to protect her daughter. The good man suffered any amount of troubles for the girl and kept his word. No father would have done for her so much as was done by this good man.

Thus kindness humanised a great sinner.

A STUDENT.—The missionary was a perfect angel.

TEACHER.—Angles are made by noble behaviour as devils are made by low-hate.

A very pertinent and striking instance that has come within my knowledge, is of my own Master. There was a follower of his who was posted as a clerk in the office of his society. This clerk fell into the trap of a person who had received innumerable favours from Dev Samaj but had been dismissed and then joined another society which excited him to write against us. This ungrateful opponent asked the clerk to steal some documents and letters from the office and hand them over to him. The clerk proved a snake. He did as he was told by that opponent. That opponent made much of those letters and documents and for two years or more he carried on relentless war against us.

This clerk left the Samaj and went and lived with the opponent. He had two daughters. They were growing up. And one day he fell ill. It was then that he realized that there was no safer place for the honour and safety of his girls than the Dev Samaj. He then approached the Master and narrated to him the full story of his ingratitude and appealed to him to take his daughters in his shelter. And Bhagwan extended his clemency to him which saved him and his children. He died a faithful sewak of Bhagwan.

Here was a case of a man who had committed breach of trust and was the cause of Bhagwan's horrible persecution for years together. But the moment he changed and sought help, all doors were open to greet him home to the atmosphere of higher life and higher work.

In our own Society, I have come across lots of instances of this nature. A society which has for its object the change of a sinner to a saint cannot afford to be harsh and vindictive with evil persons. By sympathy and understanding, we can have access to the heart of another and not by low-hate or revenge.

A STUDENT.—That is cent per cent true. Only those can

afford to be cruel to wrong doers who have no concern with their welfare. Those who are out to reform them must possess unbounded sympathy.

TEACHER.—You have caught the point. If we feel interest in each other's life and feel for the physical or the moral ills of others, we cannot afford to hate. One ought to possess mother's heart in order to understand my present lecture.

A STUDENT.—What do you mean by mother's heart !

TEACHER.—Mother's heart has been very characteristically described by a writer. A son who had lost his heart to a prostitute was induced by the latter to bring to her the heart of his mother. He went back, killed his mother, extracted her heart, placed it in a vessel and carried it to his mistress. While on his way, he stumbled and fell and then the mother's heart said, "Dear son, I hope you have not received any injury." The mother forgot that she was murdered. She only remembered that he who fell was her son and cried out to him in sympathy.

A STUDENT.—Mother is a splendid creature.

TEACHER.—Indeed she is. We all want her heart while dealing with evil persons. After all evil is a moral malady. We do not strike a man because he is down with fever. We begin to nurse him. In the same way, the moral invalid needs nursing and a good turn. In very large majority of cases this weapon would succeed millions of times more than low-hate.

A STUDENT.—What is the easiest way to realize this great truth that by making a good turn for evil, we are helping a weak person and helping ourselves, too ?

TEACHER.—We ought to learn to put ourselves in the position of the sinner and then a lot of sympathy would awaken in our heart.

There was a puritanical woman who demanded a very high standard of self-control from her husband. He wanted her love and she denied him that. In the loneliness of his heart, he fell under the blandishments of a flirt and fell. His wife came to know of this. Her indignation knew no bounds. She chastised him with her tongue. The husband who realized the high stage of life of his wife and his own weakness apologised to her to have mercy on him and excuse him. He promised never to do it again. But she left his house for good. He wrote to her letters full of entreaties. But she was adamant. One year passed.

She began to feel the agony of loneliness. In order to remove that she went to dances and clubs. She was attracted towards a man. When she was alone with that man, weakness came over her and she let him caress her. At that moment, the sight of her husband flashed across her mind. She left the man abruptly, went home and said to her mother that she was going back to her husband. The mother felt happy. Next-day, the husband was sitting in his usual depressed mood when she appeared before him. He was overjoyed and ran to greet her. She said, "First hear my wicked story and then do what you please." She then narrated how loneliness had made even her to yield to the affections of another. And then she cried reproaches on herself for her unsympathetic behaviour towards him and sobbed hysterically. At this stage, the husband gathered her in his arms and felt deeply grateful to higher powers that she had come back to him.

She lived for the rest of her life as a most devoted wife of her husband.

We understand another person by our own weaknesses.

Two or three years ago, a wealthy man who had grown bankrupt related the story of his life thus :

"Years ago, a cousin of mine suffered heavy losses in trade and came to my father for help. If my father had helped him with money, he would have saved his firm from ruin. But I advised my father not to help him. I said what I believe now to be cruel words. I said, 'A fool who does not know how to save his own money, would hardly save another's money.' My father refused help and he sank down never to rise again. After more than thirty years the same catastrophe befell me. I do not know how my business failed. I had a reputation of being one of the most cautious businessmen. But I stood before my ruined firm and wondered and I felt that the ghost of that ruined relation of mine was mocking at me and saying, 'Can you say how you failed to save your own money?' We are blind. We consider ourselves perfect and then go on lashing others."

A STUDENT.—It is a good experience, Sir.

TEACHER.—Either truly high souls possessing abundant milk of human sympathy, or those that have the experience of the sins or imagination enough to put themselves in the position of the sinner, can use this beautiful weapon of love.



## LOVE AND PUNISHMENT

A STUDENT.—Sir, you have tried to prove to us that sympathetic understanding and good turn for evil ought to be our weapons to deal with one who has done wrong. If this is so, should we abolish all punishment ?

TEACHER.—Every society or country needs government to keep law and order. Men will always be found, for centuries to come, who will offend against law and try to create disorder. In order to deal with them, police and judiciary are maintained. They deal with such transgressors. They take an impersonal view and maintain and administer justice according to established rules. They fine the offenders or even send them to jail. Their main purpose is to prevent the recurrence of the offence. This system must go on for centuries.

A STUDENT.—Sir, then punishments are quite justified.

TEACHER.—Law is not a missionary. It is a machinery. It has one function, i.e. to prevent crime. In order to do so, it punishes the offender. For ages such would be the function of law. But humanity has come to realize that when law has done its part, attempts should be made to treat the prisoner so as to make him a useful citizen when he leaves the portals of jail. He is put in jail, so that he may commit no further mischief. But in jail, he is not to be left to himself to grow worse than before. For the youth there are Borstal jails which have no other function but to educate prisoners and reform their lives. Even the adult criminals are being given kind treatment and training in better life.

A STUDENT.—If law has a right to punish, has not the individual a right to punish ?

TEACHER.—He has. I gave you the story of a prince who was abused. He would have been justified in getting the boy punished. But the king considered forgiveness better than

punishment. He, therefore, forgave him. When a student in my college about whom I have spoken to you in these lectures, stole my books and the books of other students, I would have been justified in rusticating him. But I chose the other way that proved better in its results. It also ended all bitterness. What I have tried to impress upon you is the fact that humane treatment is better than punishment. In its reaction, punishment is more dangerous than forgiveness can ever be.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly illustrate the last point ?

TEACHER.—A Pathan friend of mine who is occupying a high job, gave me some stories of his Pathan friends. He said : —

“There was a student in B.A. class. He was a Pathan. He was married and had a son. His wife went to her father's house. She overstayed there. He sent her a word to return. But she refused. One day, he suddenly appeared before his mother-in-law and asked his wife in her presence to accompany him. She refused. He raised his gun and shot her dead. The mother of the girl raised hue and cry. The murderer ran away. But her sons came to the spot. They knew what had happened. They also knew that the young murderer had also taken away his son. They pursued him and at last finding him within the range of their shot, they aimed at him and fired. He received the bullet and fell down and died. They brought their nephew back. The nephew is growing up. He is openly saying that he would avenge his father or he would be called a bastard. This bad blood would continue, one does not know how long.”

How horrible are the reactions of punishments !

A STUDENT.—Sir, but here the punishment was out of all proportions.

TEACHER.—So far the girl is concerned, no doubt it was out of all proportions. But the husband got his deserts. And yet his son does not believe so.

A STUDENT.—Sir, such reactions are not shown against Judges who punish.

TEACHER.—Judges have no personal grudge. They are impersonal in their decisions. It is the law that punishes and not the Judge. Law is made by society itself. Here the personal element is absent and hence vindictive reaction is absent. But when a man takes the law in his own hands, he introduces his

personal element and hence produces horrible reactions. That Pathan gave me another story. He said :

"There were two branches of the same family. Their feuds had reached a stage when it became difficult for any member of any branch to go into fields and cultivate them. For nearly ten years the land of both remained barren and uncultivated. At last they wanted to end this empassé. One branch sent a word to the other that they were coming in a body to attack them so that they should be aware of their intentions. All the male adults of both the families came in the open and began to fight. One branch lost one life. The other branch lost 21 lives. There was one left of the latter who died a natural death. The branch was wiped off from this earth. Then the feud ended."

If punishments could have ended the bad blood, we would not have found tribal feuds going on among the Frontier tribes even to this day. Once I went to Quetta. A day before my arrival there, I was told, a callous murder had taken place in an open street opposite the fruit market of the old town. One man had committed the murder. A *Jirgah* was appointed. The murderer and two relations of the murdered came to Quetta to attend the *Jirgah* session. All three came talking and laughing. When they arrived just outside the market, the two relatives of the murdered man, who had previously conspired, fell upon the murderer very suddenly. Before the assaulted man could recover himself, he was thrown on the ground and his neck was severed from trunk of his body. Then they threw the cloth over the dead body and sat calmly waiting to be arrested. But as soon as the news of this foul crime were conveyed to the relatives of this newly murdered man in their village, they took up their guns, rushed to the house of the murderers and shot dead their brothers.

Such are reactions of bad blood and hatred. Hence individually, as far as possible, the other weapon is better. Hate can never be eliminated by hate. It must end by love. Even law fails to reform the prisoners by adopting vindictive measures. All over the world now it is the reformatory measures that are being accepted and adopted.

It was very recently that I read a true story. One man who had grown up into a gangster had fallen in love with a

girl. However, he was sent to jail. When he came out, he found the girl changed. She always avoided him. One day however, he found her in tears. He felt pity for her and enquired from her the reason of her misery. Then she confided to him that she had fallen in love with a decent man who had promised to marry her. He had, however, disappeared and she was going to have a baby. She feared her father would kill her. She appealed to him to save her. This man was on parole. He could not marry so long as he was on parole. If he did, he would immediately be sent to jail. He had also to report himself daily to the police station. He told the girl all this. But the girl pressed him to marry her and all would remain a secret. He made this huge sacrifice. He married her.

One day, a police officer came to his house and arrested him on the ground that he had violated the conditions of parole by marrying a girl. He was again sent to jail. In jail he was served with papers for divorce by his wife, for a prisoner sent to jail for felony could be divorced by mere notice. The man who served the notice on him told him that the old lover of his wife who was also a crook had returned and that his own wife had betrayed him to the police in order to get rid of him.

This gave him the deepest wound. He became sullen, sour and moody. He would fight with the warden and get lashes and was confined in solitary cells. But all this made him still worse. As a last resort he was put in the charge of another felon. This felon had learnt by experience some good philosophy of life. He, then, calmly told him, "You have done a lot for others but have neglected one person." "And who is that, sir?" He asked. The fellow replied, "That person is your own soul or self. You have poisoned it for others. Your treacherous wife and her burglar lover would meet their day. Don't worry about it. Worry about yourself whom you have never attended. Educate it, sweeten it and your entire outlook would change."

This man gave up brooding over wrongs done to him. He began to learn some craft. He quickly learnt one. Before he went out of jail, he had become master of that craft and he had every hope to eke out a respectable living and grow into a respectable citizen. Thus by adopting the philosophy of self-improvement, he rose into another and higher sphere of

life. We are led by our personal wrongs to brood too much and poison our souls. If we devote that time in self-improvement, we would learn to be decent people. The crook above mentioned changed his life by renouncing the path of low-hate and forgetting the wrongs.

If a felon can improve, a decent man would work miracles in his soul by leaving the path of low-hate and adopting the path of sympathetic understanding and human treatment of others.

A STUDENT.—Sir, could you illustrate how kindness works miracles ?

TEACHER.—There was a police officer. As a police officer one has to do most unpleasant duty. And yet, even the persons he had to arrest and put in jail, would not hate him. During Civil Disobedience days when he had to serve some gentlemen patriots with warrants he would give them intimation that the warrants were received by him and asked them when it would be convenient for them to surrender. They would in the meantime attend to their duties and then surrender. In their absence, when they were in jail, this police officer would almost everyday go to their houses, enquire about the needs of families and in several cases purchased things from bazar for the ladies left behind. Hence the citizens loved him more than they feared him. When he was transferred from there, those whom he had arrested as a measure of duty, were the loudest in singing his praises. A large representative meeting was held to honour him. Thus he converted his most unpleasant position into one of love and praise.

In dealing with ordinary criminals too, his behaviour was more of a friend than of a policeman. If a man in the position of a police officer in India could make himself so loveable and win human hearts, why should we not make an attempt to adopt the path of understanding and love ? The final solution of human troubles lies on the way of understanding and love and not on the way of hate and revenge.

A STUDENT.—This police officer must be an angel.

TEACHER.—If a police officer can combine love with honest discharge of duties much more can we be angels by extending to each other the attitude of understanding and love.

A STUDENT.—Could you please give us some other incidents

of the life of that police officer ?

TEACHER.—Yes, I can give you one more telling incident of his life.

Once a highly educated person led an unprovoked attack on our College and had it picketted in the name of God. His inflammatory slogans were calculated to produce serious troubles. He then ordered his volunteers to make a rush at the gate of the College. This was criminal and he and his volunteers were arrested. This police officer had to do the unpleasant duty of arresting them. But so long these persons were in the lock-up, he would go to the house of the leader and enquire about the needs or troubles of his family. The leader fell seriously ill and was in hospital for months. He would go to him and express his sympathy. He was often not received cordially. But his sympathy would not let him mind that. He placed his services voluntarily at the disposal of the patient. The cases were withdrawn as we had no motive of getting anybody punished. But it was due to this police officer to bring about a compromise. He was never happy to see any body punished. He did his duty well, but also practised this humane principle and hence when he retired, the whole town felt as if a father was being removed.

A STUDENT—A very fine example indeed !

TEACHER.—There was one Indian District Judge who never throughout his life, convicted any person to capital punishment. From all around he was being told that he would make murders frequent if he did not punish murderers with hanging. But he never relented. No body could prove that his mercy led to more murders. His entire view was more of mercy than of justice. The pleaders of every place he went to, kept his photo as that of a saint and in some cases I found pleaders garlanding his photo in their houses. An equally good man—a Judge—believed in punishments. He gave serious punishments. He was not given one-tenth of the love which was lavished on the merciful Judge both by the people and the advocates.

In all walks of life it is sympathy and love that pay and not low-hate, revenge or snobbishness.

## MORAL VALUE OF PUNISHMENT

A STUDENT.—Sir, I have come to believe that what is needed most is the introduction of human touch even in the soulless machinery of Law and Administration. A police officer, who has to do his very unpleasant duty to arrest some person or get him punished, and who is hated for such an unpleasant task, ceases to be a horrible being if he introduces human touch in his dealings. I am, therefore, convinced that every one of us should use humane method even when we have to punish.

But what is the moral value of punishment ?

TEACHER.—Punishments, as I said in my last talk, are preventive in their nature or function. They punish an offender in order to save others from him and if possible to stop the recurrence of the same offence by him.

A STUDENT.—Do punishments succeed in their function in all cases ?

TEACHER.—The heart of man is almost never changed by punishments. The criminal does not turn into a good man because of fines or punishments. But it is a fact that order, however, is produced in society.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly illustrate how the heart of a criminal is seldom changed ?

TEACHER.—There is a recorded instance of an Afghan criminal in the days when the punishment for theft consisted in cutting off the limb. This criminal committed theft. His right arm was cut off. He recovered from his injury. After some time, he again committed theft with the left hand. His left arm was, then, cut off. When he recovered from this injury, he stole a jar worth two pice with the two stamps of his arms. He was, then, beheaded.

A STUDENT.—This, Sir, is an extreme case.

TEACHER.—Such extreme cases are very common. Only they

are not brought before the public.

There was one student who was a thief. Before he matriculated, he had learnt the art of stealing. The first theft which attracted notice and directed suspicion against him was the one he committed near his house. Some college students had been living in a house near his own. They had cash money with them. He scented this. In their absence, he opened the lock of their room. He entered and opened with a master key the locks of their trunks and took cash money only. When the students returned, they detected that their trunks had been tampered with. They found their cash missing. The boy was suspected. But no body dared to question him as he was a child of a very respectable family. He passed matriculation and joined college. He then stole some rupees of a teacher. For this theft, which was partly traced to him, he was beaten to the inch of his life. His very bones ached. But all this punishment was wasted on him.

He then began to commit thefts in a boarding house. He was caught and given a terrible trashing before he was handed over to police. He was tried and fined. But he was not affected. He committed house-tresspass with an intent to commit an offence and was convicted to six months' rigorous imprisonment. He came out of jail and again began committing more thefts. At last he was sentenced to penal servitude for about 14 years.

Here is a case of an educated youngman whom repeated punishment did not change.

A STUDENT.—This is an eye-opener, Sir.

TEACHER.—I have already described to you the story of a criminal who was both an educated man and clever Government employee.

My own belief is that it is rather common that punishments do not change the heart of man.

There was a Reader of an E.A.C. He was a married man. And yet he had amours with a woman many years senior to him. She was a widow. Relations of the widow resented this. One day they entrapped him in that house and did unutterable things with him. I cannot record what they did with him. The man was ill for nearly a month, owing to the injuries he received. But as soon as he recovered, he revived his illicit rela-



tions with that woman. Both had, however, grown wiser. They met in a way as not to be discovered. The sin was continued but the means were changed.

A STUDENT.—All that the punishments come to is that they make a man careful so as not to be discovered.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Newer kinds of ways are discovered by them to satisfy their sinful heart. Recently, I read in a magazine that some crooks had discovered a new way to enrich themselves. They saw that lots of middle-aged maidens who were rich were love-starved. They began to attract them in many a winsome way which such crooks usually know. They married them. Thereafter, they either killed them cleverly or disappeared with their riches. Thus they carried on their traffic. In case of disappearance if they were caught, their so-called wives would go out of their way to shield them. This the crooks knew and hence as a rule they escaped punishment. Only one case was typical as it was taken to court and it revealed the crimes committed in the line.

There was a man who married a rich middle-aged love-starved woman. But he began to remain away from her for long. He said he was a detective and therefore he had to go on his duty to distant places. But his wife suspected. She engaged a private detective to unearth the mystery. This detective found out that whenever this crook left his wife for his supposed tour, some theft took place in the neighbourhood. One day he asked the wife if she would let him see her husband's attache case even for an hour. That attache case the man never lost sight of. He invariably kept it with himself. But once only he left it as he had an urgent piece of work somewhere for an hour or so. The detective opened it and then found to his dismay ten insurance policies of his own previous wives and one thousand pounds in cash. He got him arrested. It was discovered that he had killed ten women and he was even premeditating to kill this wife, too. He had already got an insurance policy on her. This one case caused a sensation and revealed the new line of crime introduced by those crooks.

A STUDENT.—You mean then, Sir, that the criminal is more anxious to escape the grip of law and punishment than to give up crime.

TEACHER.—Yes.

A STUDENT.—Why is it so ?

TEACHER.—This is so because man is steeped in darkness about his soul-life. He is not able to see the gain or loss of his soul life. To him higher and lower life has no meaning. He is led by the nose by low-love of pleasures. He feels easy money as a source of pleasure to him. He loves to have easy money. Hence he steals, he commits robberies, dacoities, dishonesties, cheating, corruption, gambling, etc. He wants to have as many victims to his love of lust as possible. Chastity, loyalty, faithfulness to married troth and clean life have no meaning for him. He wants newer triumphs. He loves to have newer conquests. If he has got thrashing, he would try to gratify his love in a way as not to have a thrashing. His fondness for the so-called new conquests is insatiable and this is why fidelity in homes, so far as males are concerned, is getting rarer.

When man is guided only by what is pleasurable, he cannot but continue to be a sinner.

A STUDENT.—Then, Sir, consciousness of what is right and wrong is absent in sinners.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. As no man in the possession of normal sanity would agree to have his eyes torn out in order to have a few hundred rupees, in the same way no man who possesses the sense of right and wrong would destroy his morals for self, power, or lust, etc

Once I read a story of a crime which caused a terrible sensation. At a flag-sation, a young extraordinarily beautiful girl-mother got down by mistake. The Station Master who worked also as a booking clerk as well as a ticket collector, saw her. His passions were inflamed. When all persons had gone to their villages which were at long distances from the station, he called her in his room and made overtures to her. She was all alone. She entreated him to save her honour, but the man was obdurate. But before he could assault her, he was called in another room by a telegraph call. As soon as he left she locked the door from inside. But her baby was left outside. The villian took her baby and threatened to kill it in case she did not open the door. She refused and he killed her baby cruelly. She wept and screamed but she did not open the door. When time for the next train arrived, passengers came for tickets. But the booking room was locked from inside.

The Station Master said that an insane woman had entered the room in his absence and locked it up. But the woman revealed her tale. The train arrived. The guard then wired to authorities. When high officials came, she opened the door and narrated her tale of woe. The baby's body was unearthed. The Station Master was arrested, tried and punished.

Here the girl who had the sense of chastity or loyalty did not sacrifice it even to save her own baby.

Sense of right and wrong is a wonderful sense.

A STUDENT.—Kindly give us more illustrations.

TEACHER.—It is said about Maharishi Devendra Nath Tagore, father of the great poet, that his father left his large property heavily burdened. His sense of right could not make him bear to consider that vast property as his when it was heavily encumbered. When the creditors took their case before the court, this great man took his title deeds and placing them before the court said that the creditors could have them all. The creditors were prepared for a fight but not for such a gesture. One of them was so deeply touched that he broke into sobs. Even tears moistened the eyes of the judge who recommended him to the mercy of creditors. The creditors refused to take the titles and trusted him implicitly to manage the property and pay off their debts.

He paid every pie. He even paid one very big donation, though wrongly promised by his father to a charitable cause, with full interest.

This is how sense of right and wrong lifts a man up and raises him to heights of moral eminence which bewilders a sinner.

A STUDENT.—Is this sense of right and wrong a gift from parents or can it be awakened ?

TEACHER.—It can be awakened if one has got it in germ state in heredity. In our Society, hundreds of cases have happened when men who had cheated others at some time in their life, have by breathing in higher atmosphere, awakened to the horror of the wrong and have found peace by paying back the amounts to those whom they had defrauded or to their heirs. Such persons can never cheat again so long that sense is there.

Besides making money compensations, this sense of right

and wrong helps man in other ways also.

A gentleman was sexually so weak that, as he admitted to me, he had once tried to assault a sweepress. And yet this man lived and died later on as the most chaste and trusted man. His sense of right and wrong in this line awakened to such an extent that he could not bear even an impure thought. He served men and women in hundreds in this line. Towards women his attitude was of a real father and he made destinies of many a woman. Wherever he lived and moved, he carried with him an atmosphere of purity.

A STUDENT.—This kind of sense is indeed a great blessing for man.

TEACHER.—Every higher sense is a great blessing. It elevates human conduct. It changes the very outlook on life. Higher life becomes a real living thing to aspire after. The man so awakened realizes higher life as his aim.

A STUDENT.—Kindly give us some more instances of the glory of this sense.

TEACHER.—There has been a great man happily in our Society who was a *Tehsildar*. He is known as a *Farishita* (angelic) *Tehsildar*. A Governor of our Province, who was once his immediate officer, always spoke most eloquently about his wonderful honesty and fairness. His sense of honesty was so keen that even when he used to go on tours, he would not accept grass for his horse free or even a grain of corn for himself. On several occasions, he would take his own food materials from home. His keenest sense made it impossible for him to accept anything gratis. Hence in all his dealings he was absolutely fair to all. His moral strength was also felt by all. His example was most elevating.

A STUDENT.—Then it is higher sense alone, Sir, which can keep us fair, just and clean.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Punishments can never achieve this. And so long this higher sense is not awakened, change of heart is impossible. This is why I want to impress on you all that punishment may keep up general order in society and prevent to some measure open crime but it has no power to change a criminal's heart.

A STUDENT.—I understand fully that change of heart is not possible through law and punishments.

Another STUDENT.—How does this higher sense develop in us ?

TEACHER.—It develops by higher atmosphere charged with higher repulsions and higher loves.

I remember an instance of the life of another official—a Dev Samajist—who got furious when on his return home he found a big tin of ghee, which he was informed had been left by a man. He sent for the man and said, “Take away this filth from here or I send you to jail !”

This was nothing but strong repulsion for dishonesty which made him so furious and so much above corruption.

It was the same strong repulsion against infidelity which made that mother sacrifice her baby in order to preserve her chastity.

It is the same repulsion against injustice which keeps some person within bounds of justice.

We have to develop these strong repulsions in a higher atmosphere.

## NEED FOR KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

A STUDENT.—Suppose, a man has no desire for truth, how does he suffer ?

TEACHER.—True knowledge is the foundation of life, as false belief is the herald of death.

Even our everyday life is not possible without true knowledge. A young man opened a shop. He had a limited capital. He had a false belief that rapid sales meant more profits. He began to give things on credit indiscriminately. The buyers who could have food-stuffs easily on credit thronged to his shop. One of his relatives came to his shop and looked into his business policy and accounts. He was alarmed to see that there was rarely any cash transaction. He warned him telling him in vernacular, "All credit and no cash is a gateway to business crash." The young man demurred at this and told him to mind his own business. At last there was a limit to his own credit. He could not purchase anything from bazar. His sales slackened. His business stopped. Those whom he had sold things on credit displayed no promptitude pay their debts off. He had no money to file suits. The defaulters became bold. He was completely ruined. This is how ignorance of true policy in business wrecked his life.

I was present at a place where a young girl joyfully narrated to her mother the story of how she had made a good bargain. She had purchased for ten rupees what looked like gold beads. The mother saw the stuff. Her face changed. She threw the beads at her and said, "Foolish girl, they are not worth even eight annas. They are false beads. Here the girl could be cheated because she had no true knowledge.

Humanity has gradually learnt a great lesson. It has invented ways to test gold and pearls. Those well-informed never strike a bargain unless they have got the gold tested. True

knowledge helps. Ignorance harms. False beliefs ruin us.

A STUDENT.—These are very ordinary instances, Sir. Give us more telling examples of how absence of true knowledge leads us to ruin.

TEACHER.—Let me take you step by step to the true understanding of my position.

I know of a family whose two sons were betrothed in some respectable families. The girls had not been seen by the bridegrooms' parents. Marriages were duly celebrated. One of these girls turned out to be a T.B. patient and died after a few months. The other had frequent fits of epilepsy. In spite of all the best and honest efforts the husband could not get her restored to normal condition. She had to be abandoned and left in care of her parents.

Here want of true knowledge proved a positive calamity to the two boys.

I read a story. An official's wife was travelling with a village woman. The latter was going to a town to have a good match for her girl. She was wealthy enough. But her girl who was with her was not pretty. This official's wife advised the village woman to give her girl an attractive name and get her photographed by a very competent photographer, so that she may appear in her photo as a beauty. Both ladies parted. As the circumstances would have it, when the official's wife's son came back with his bride selected through photo, his mother was shocked to find that the new bride brought to her house by him was the self-same ugly girl who had travelled with her mother. Thus even the photograph was not a true picture of the girl's face.

This is why the parents and the boys now insist upon seeing the girls. True knowledge alone helps us.

A STUDENT.—Even such cases are too ordinary to illustrate the great principle.

TEACHER.—A small girl had a baby in her lap. This baby felt thirsty. This ignorant girl found coloured water in which the clothes were washed and made the baby drink his fill out of it. It was poisonous water. The girl falsely took it to be healthy water. Facts do not change their nature to suit our wishes and delusions. In Nature, a fact is a fact and it shall remain a fact whatever views an ignorant, misled or foolish man

may hold about it. This is why the dear baby died of poisoning. His parents came to know of the tragedy just before the baby collapsed. They called in the aid of a doctor. But the poison had effected the precious body too far. All aid proved abortive. The baby succumbed. This is how ignorance about facts proved the end of a child.

A STUDENT.—This is terrible.

TEACHER.—Indeed it is so. Thousands and millions of lives become the victims of infections and serious illness because of their false beliefs. In my town, small-pox is said to be the visitation of a wrathful goddess. Thousands of homes still believe it to be so. Instead of calling in the aid of a capable physician, they call in quacks and take the child to some temple of the goddess. Exposure has killed many a child. Dangerous practices of quacks have lost many a dear baby to many an ignorant mother. But falsehoods still flourish. Death-roll mounts up. Nature declares the folly of such false beliefs. But man carries on his devotion to false beliefs. And with what results? Even to-day, millions in India resort to tombs for cure of serious diseases. A Rai Bahadur, who was a most distinguished contractor, who dined with the governors, suffered from a delusion that a particular tomb would cure his serious trouble. Doctors advised an immediate operation. But the Rai Bahadur turned a deaf ear to them. He was carried to the tomb and back came a corpse. His was not a mental ailment. It was a physical trouble demanding immediate attention. All operations are, no doubt, not successful. But most are. A corpse in a tomb is no living surgeon to operate. Hence many times more persons die of such false beliefs than those treated by qualified or capable physicians and surgeons.

A STUDENT.—How does evil result from falsehoods or false beliefs in the mental world?

TEACHER.—There was a Muslim old man in our neighbourhood. He was doing some hand-work and his earnings seldom amounted to more than Rs. 15 per month. In those days, the wicked element which has intensified communal hatred had not come into power. We all children gathered around that old Muslim as if he was a relation of us all—all Hindu and Muslim children. One day he gave a sermon to us. He said. "Dear children, I am a living tragedy of a most erroneous



belief. When the English School was opened in the town, Hindu boys made a rush for admission. Every boy used to get scholarship or prize for joining an institution. We Muslim boys made a joint resolve not to get admitted. We thought the schools were opened to convert us all to Christianity. Again, the English people write their language from left to right while our language, which we believe to be God's language, is written from right to left—in exactly the opposite way. We believed it to be a sacrilege to write English characters. But who suffered? Not Hindus. We Muslims suffered. My other playmates—the Hindus—are about to retire on the pension of hundreds of rupees, while I am here not able to earn more than fifteen rupees a month. Go and study if you want to succeed in life."

His words spoken more than four decades ago still ring in my ears. Nothing harms a man so much as an erroneous belief or practice. Nature abhors fictions and hence those who are caught in the eddies of false beliefs suffer immensely.

A STUDENT.—I see how there is need for true knowledge.

TEACHER.—A woman was once narrating the story of her fall. She was once a respected wife and mother. She had religious inclinations. Once she went to see a sadhu whom his disciples had belauded to the skies. She said, "I went to see him. He was a stout and strong man who seemed a Bhogi (sensual person) rather than a Yogi (an ascetic). He was all kindness. Gradually he explained his creed to me till he found that I had blind faith in him. One day he said that all was Maya, and he and myself were not souls apart. We both were one and we should melt into one. After sometime, his meaning flashed on me. I began to feel that as I was not a soul apart, why should I not unite with a man full of self-realization and thus share his spiritual bliss. I fell. Our meetings continued. They became too frequent to go unnoticed. I was betrayed. My husband caught me red-handed. I am, thereafter, a neglected wife, a hated mother and practically an outcast."

Here was a victim of false philosophy. A higher or illumined soul may escape this trap. Sex-indulgence can never be a symptom of spiritual life in any decent system of thought. The sense of right and wrong is based on the fact that others do exist and they have rights, which rights we must respect. If others do not at all exist, there are no rights enjoyed by them.

Hence morality vanishes and chaos supervenes.

A STUDENT.—It is horrible, Sir.

TEACHER.—When one renounces facts and lands in fictions, he must suffer the doom.

There have been creeds in India and outside which have taught that it is right to offer even one's newly-wedded bride to the so-called manifestation of the so-called God, as thereby one offers the dearest thing to God. One such head of a great sect was unmasked and exposed by one member belonging to that sect. The case went to court. The head was proved to be dangerous to the morals of his followers. But there are many foolish people who still cling to that wrong belief.

False beliefs spell death of morality and better life.

A STUDENT.—I never realized before that false beliefs were so dangerous. But is true knowledge always good ?

TEACHER.—For centuries our countrymen could not see that common interests, common purposes and disciplined and organized life were needed to save India from the invaders. They used stereo-typed and archaic methods of war. The Muslims who were much less in number, but well-knit together by ties of sympathy and religion, gradually became the masters of India. Both Hindus and Musalmans in their own turn fell before western traders, who being driven to war, used latest methods of war and utilized Indian forces against India. This was all due to their being more enlightened on the strategy and new methods of war. It was true knowledge that gave the British Company vast territorial possessions—in fact the whole of India. Italy defeated the brave Abyssinian race because of greater knowledge of the weapons and methods of war.

A STUDENT.—Such a knowledge in the hands of strong men proves a curse for weaker people. Does it not ?

TEACHER.—Yes, it does. It is sad that wicked hearts make a wicked use of their acquired knowledge. But good hearts utilize the knowledge acquired by them for their own protection and the well-being of others. The wicked turn the knowledge into baneful channels for others because they are in their turn blind to the truth that wicked use of materials to the prejudice of others reacts on their own self as well.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, true knowledge also proves harmful.

TEACHER.—True knowledge in itself is always helpful and

ignorance or false beliefs and ideas in themselves are always harmful. The knowledge of diseases and their cures is always good. Knowledge of navigation and flying by air is always helpful. The knowledge of steam, electricity, radium etc., in itself is always useful. It is such a knowledge which has filled man with faith and snatched him out of the state of helplessness before the elements of Nature, to which, owing to ignorance, he lay prostrated and paralysed. True knowledge is a power. It is a tonic to soul. In itself true knowledge is an unalloyed blessing. What is needed is to convert its use to make life a blessing. In order to be able to do so, man should have true knowledge of good and evil. He who is devoid of this knowledge, which is the supreme knowledge, is in fact, blind and insane.

All knowledge becomes a blessing if we know what is good, what is the highest good and how to harvest all other knowledge in the service of our highest good. Hence knowledge of good and evil is most essential.

## WHAT IS GOOD AND EVIL

A STUDENT.—Sir, what is meant by good and evil ?

TEACHER.—Good and evil have reference to soul-life of man as food and poison have reference to the bodily life of man.

A STUDENT.—Do you think, Sir, that good is food for soul and evil is poison for it ?

TEACHER.—Indeed so.

A STUDENT.—Sir, how are we to understand what is good for soul and what constitutes evil for it ?

TEACHER.—In order to understand and realize what is knowledge of Good and Evil, you have to study Nature. Body and soul of man are both the products of Nature and hence both are subject to its eternal laws so far as the problems of their life and death are concerned. The higher people in humanity have apprehended and realized this glorious truth that they have to knock at the door of Nature in order to find out the laws of life and death of body. They have instituted research work in matters of food and drink. They have embodied their discoveries in massive volumes. They propagate them in several magazines. They have established institutions to teach the discovered truths and carry on further research. They have popularized the great fact that Nature and Nature alone is the fountain and storehouse of all knowledge pertaining to the body of man. Hence knowledge about body has come to occupy the dignified position of the *science of body*.

A STUDENT.—What is a science ?

TEACHER.—Science means knowledge of facts and laws of Nature. If we ignore Nature and its facts and laws, there would be no science. The bed-rock of scientific knowledge are the facts and laws of Nature.

A STUDENT.—Sir, do you claim that nothing deserves to

be called a science which is not based upon the facts and laws of Nature ?

TEACHER.—Yes, I do. No knowledge can be called scientific which is not based upon facts and laws of Nature, and which cannot submit itself to the test of experimental interrogation.

A STUDENT.—Of what value is that belief then, which is not scientific ?

TEACHER.—It is of little value. Such a belief serves only one purpose and that is, to bewilder man, to perpetuate fictions and thereby weaken or vitiate his power of accepting truth.

A STUDENT.—On what bed-rocks of facts and laws of Nature do you build the edifice of good and evil ?

TEACHER.—It we study the history of the progress of this planet, we are struck with certain miracles wrought by Nature on this earth. When this our planet detached itself from the grand Luminary and commenced its pilgrimage round the Sun, it was a ball of fire unfit for habitation. It took thousands of centuries to cool down and have vast sheet of water and an atmosphere. The stage was thus set for another epic. In the process of evolution, time came when out of the inanimate forces came into being, forces which could be called living forces. Nature has left its foot-prints of growth on the sands of time and bed of earth. These living forces exist in their primitive form even to-day. They have, as in their initial stages, remained incapable of developing a living body. But some of them came under the operation of the grand process of evolution and developed a glorious constructive power of building a living body. We call this living body *living cell*. Such cells exist even to-day. These bodies were crude and primitive but all the same they were living. This stage of growth is still marked and still apparent. The process of Nature continued on its march of progress. From the uni-cellular beings those that got favourable conditions developed into multi-cellular bodies. This power of building multi-cellular bodies was also a constructive power but of a superior kind than the power of building uni-cellular beings. These higher living forces did not stop in their growth. The process of evolution or growth in Nature is most insistent. *It persists in its march. It leaves behind such existences as*

cannot progress further. It carries on its work with those which can admit of progress. This is why all such living powers which march on to higher kinds, developed on the plane of construction. These higher kinds of life-powers were able to build higher kinds of bodies. It is such higher and better constructive life-powers which have brought into being countless existences in plant and animal kingdoms. The grand process of evolution went on on its most wonderful and constructive march. From the animal kingdom appeared certain species equipped with higher life-powers. These living but higher constructive powers evolved a species called man. The human kingdom came then under the operation of evolution. Those races which could admit of growth grew into progressive and civilized races while those left out remained on the verge of animal kingdom.

Now these four kingdoms—the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom and the human kingdom—are, as is apparent from the brief review given above, most closely and intimately connected.

A STUDENT.—This review of the appearance of these four kingdoms is entrancing. But is it true ?

TEACHER.—The truth of the above is writ large on the face of these kingdoms. Nature has left its marks not only on the bed of the earth but on the existences themselves. There is continuity of life visible in all these kingdoms. The anatomy of living beings carries the irrefutable evidence of common parentage and common laws.

Besides this, it is a fact that they are so intimately related that it is impossible for a higher kingdom to exist without the existence of the lower kingdoms ! If we take away the mineral world, the remaining three kingdoms cease to function and exist.

A STUDENT.—How, Sir ?

TEACHER.—Take away oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon etc., and all living bodies would disappear. All living forces existing in the plant, the animal and the human worlds would fail to construct a living body without these materials. Again, can the plant world ever exist and multiply without the mineral world ? Assuredly not. Can the animal and the human worlds exist without the vegetable world ? Assuredly not. Even

carnivorous animals and men ordinarily eat the flesh of such animals as subsist on the vegetable kingdom. Looking to this closest and life-and-death-relationship among the four kingdoms, we cannot but come to the conclusion that they are all brought into being by the process of evolution much in the same way as top, middle and lower stems or trunks of a tree come into being by the one and the same process. Continuity and relationship are the two lines of incontrovertible evidence to warrant our belief that the evolutionary or constructive forces of Nature are the undoubted architects which have built all these kingdoms.

A STUDENT.—There is no doubt that the closest relationship exists in these four kingdoms. There is no doubt that the continuity of work of Nature is visible in these kingdoms. But, Sir, what do you want to derive from these two grand facts ?

TEACHER.—I want just to impress upon you a simple fact that the laws which bring anything into being are the laws which rule its continued existence. Just as the evolutionary or constructive process has brought all the four kingdoms into being, they alone can keep them alive and prolong their existence.

A STUDENT.—Sir, suppose it is granted that this is a fact, what follows ?

TEACHER.—Once this fact is apprehended, it follows that our life-power which is the great architect of our body has to develop more its constructive power if it is to live and prolong its existence here or hereafter.

A STUDENT.—But how can it develop constructive power more and more ?

TEACHER.—It can do so by constructing others. Such is the verdict of Nature's evolutionary or constructive process.

A STUDENT.—How can we construct others ?

TEACHER.—We construct others when we better their outward form and improve their inner powers.

A STUDENT.—How can we do so ?

TEACHER.—We can do so by developing altruistic or higher powers. A merciful man ministers to the body of another. He nurses the sick, feeds the poor, clothes the naked and helps

the helpless by opening orphanages etc. A lover of educational progress of others opens schools and colleges. One inspired by the higher feeling of emancipating a lower soul from low-loves and low-hates and evolving noble forces in him, builds up the soul-life of others. These helpers are called good souls. The work that they achieve is called good work. The constructive work is called good. The destructive work is called evil.

A STUDENT.—Would you please tell us what is destructive work ?

TEACHER.—A thief robs another. He steals away the provisions of another's safety. He trespasses on the rights of others. A dishonest man takes bribes and thus trespasses on what does not belong to him. He covets what is not due to him. By dishonesty he is led to commit abortion of justice. He acquits the guilty or imprisons an innocent being. He is disloyal to his master and a traitor to society. An adulterer degrades the partner, does wrong in relation to his wife if he has any, trespasses upon the honour of a family. All the persons by such trespasses degrade their moral life and liquidate their spiritual vitality. By harming others they destroy their building vitality. Similarly, the greedy, the selfish, the vain, the jealous, the vindictive, the slave to wrong public opinion etc.,—all of them harm others and degrade their own lives.

All these forces and others which lead man to transgressions are all of them called evil forces because they are all destructive forces.

Hence you may remember just this that those who adjust their lives with the constructive work of Nature become good and those who work against it become evil. These are the necessary conclusions of the review that I have given you above.

A STUDENT.—This is an altogether new interpretation and new view that you have given to us.

TEACHER.—True, but it is nevertheless the only interpretation viewed from the point of view of the process of evolution which rules the constructive side of Nature. Buddha the compassionate, Ashoka the merciful, Christ the meek and humble etc., command far deeper veneration than Napoleon



the great, Timur the Lame, Changez Khan because the former have served others, while the latter merely have dominated others. The first have won love, while those of the second group have inspired fear. The first group have lived for others, the second group have lived for themselves. The memory of Buddha, Ashoka, Christ etc., is treasured up as that of great deliverers while that of the second group as of conquerers. The first in a way aided the cause of construction while the second aided the cause of destruction. The usurpers admire Napoleon, Timur and Changez Khan but humanity admires Buddha, Ashoka and Christ.

A STUDENT.—Is there any other Nature-based reason for the above interpretation of good and evil?

TEACHER.—Yes, there is. When all the four kingdoms of Nature are so intimately related that they cannot exist without one another, they cannot but be called organs of the vast machinery of Nature. Human kingdom is unthinkable without the first three kingdoms and is entirely dependent on them. It is therefore, to the highest interest of man that these three kingdoms should exist. He has therefore to develop only such heart-forces in his being as help him to enable these kingdoms to exist and become better. Only such heart-forces are therefore indispensable for man as make him a factor of construction and growth of others.

A STUDENT.—I understand you, Sir. A part can remain a living and healthy part only when it helps the whole organism. If it fails to do so, it withers and dies. If it proves harmful, it grows diseased and dies. Such is the law of Nature and such is its verdict. Unhelpful part proves a useless part. It therefore withers away. Harmful part is a diseased part. It has therefore to be cured or amputated. Such is the destiny of a man who either proves useless or harmful to Nature.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. All such forces which lead a man to prove useless to others or harmful to others are destructive forces. All such forces which lead a man to prove helpful and serviceable and enables him to promote the higher interests or good of others are called good-producing forces while the contrary forces are called evil-producing forces.

## NATURE OF GOOD

A STUDENT.—Sir, you have said in the last lecture that by altruistic forces we produce good in relation to others. What do you really mean by an altruistic force ?

TEACHER.—A man is said to possess some altruistic force when he is led by an inner force to remove suffering or physical or mental disabilities of another, to promote his knowledge, to liberate him from false beliefs, or false rites or evil customs *and in doing such a service he neither expects any return in this world from any person or society in the form of praise, prize, or title, nor dreams of getting any return in the next world in the form of so-called heavenly gifts.* Nay, such a man led by such a force is ready, on the contrary, to sacrifice some of his wealth and property in that noble work and to surrender his physical powers, his mental powers, his education, his knowledge etc., in promoting it.

A STUDENT.—Why would a man do such a motiveless act ?

TEACHER.—How is it motiveless ?

A STUDENT.—A man dominated by such an altruistic feeling, is expected to serve others without expecting even a return in appreciation or praise or without possessing any longing for power, prize, or title or even dreaming of having a place in heaven and enjoy its gifts. Besides this, he is expected to sacrifice some of his wealth and property and to surrender his physical and mental powers in furtherance thereof. Such a man would be simply a superman or something inconceivable !

TEACHER.—You seem to forget one eternal fact about the psychology of human soul. The dominant motive of the activities of man is happiness. This happiness is the result of gratification of inner heart-forces. A man devoid of an inner

force would not long for happiness to be derived out of the exercise or gratification of that force. A child in his child-stage possesses no lust of a grown-up man. Hence he is unaware of the pleasure of the sexual indulgence which youth longs to derive out of it. A man devoid of greed is a stranger to the pleasure derived by a greedy man when he hoards money. A man who has no child of his own, cannot imagine what joy parents feel when they meet their children after separation or as they see them grow and the agony they feel when they are seriously ill or when one of them dies. Pleasure or happiness is the name of satisfaction arising out of the gratification of a desire. Pain or sorrow arises out of the loss of or frustration from the object of gratification. If a man possesses a desire for fame, name, power, position etc., he will long for praise, appreciation, prize, title etc., but not otherwise.

*Now, all pleasures arising out of desires for self are pleasures of low-loves and low-hates. All pleasures arising out of desires for the good of others are higher pleasures. They arise out of the satisfaction of higher or altruistic forces. When a man is content only with such a satisfaction and seeks no satisfaction at all of any low-love or low-hate, he is said to be dominated by altruistic force.*

A STUDENT.—Don't you think, Sir, that such persons who are content with merely a satisfaction arising out of service of others are few and far between.

TEACHER.—Indeed they are very few. They may be even counted on finger-ends in any group or community of people. A pure and unalloyed higher force demands all service and expectation of no return. Take the case of mercy. Every man feels his own pain or sorrow. But in the case of mercy it is expected that the fortunate man possessing that feeling should necessarily feel pain of another, sorrow of another, or misery of another as his own pain, his own sorrow or his own misery. Led by it he should feel an urge to remove that pain, that sorrow, or that misery of another. He should *not rest content with merely an urge. He must actually materialize his urge* and thus take practical steps in that direction. In doing all this, the only satisfaction with which he should feel content is the gratification of that feeling of mercy. He should not even in thought, expect appreciation from others or even

formal expression of thanks from those so unselfishly served by him. This is the positive side of altruism as a force. The negative side of every altruistic force is that it does not cease to function if, instead of gratitude, such a noble soul receives ingratitude; instead of praise, he gets calumny, even of the vilest character; instead of co-operation, he receives obstruction etc. There have been men in history who have lost heart because their noble service has got them an ill or wicked turn. An altruistic force is irrepressible and undefeatable.

A STUDENT.—Suppose, Sir, a man :

- (1) founds a hospital for the service of men or animals and leaves a good permanent fund for it ; or
- (2) endows an institution started to carry on research in connection with any great epidemic or a serious human ailment ; or
- (3) builds a *dharamshala* or a *sarai* for the comfort of the pilgrims or travellers and leaves behind sufficient funds for its upkeep; or
- (4) builds tanks, reservoirs or water-works to remove the scarcity of water for men or animals; or
- (5) lays down gardens for the recreation of the general public; or
- (6) opens orphanages for the poor, asylums for the sick, homes for the aged and infirm etc., etc.;

does he not thereby give a *proof* of the fact that he possesses an altruistic force ?

TEACHER.—*Not necessarily.* The marks distinguishing an altruistic force from others are plain and definite. A man dominated by an altruistic desire is content only with the satisfaction arising out of it. He should be clean of all intentions or ambitions to get praise, power, prize, title, name, fame, etc. He should be clean of even an intention or ambition to get praise from his supposed deity or any gifts in the so-called heavens or any other return after death. A man dominated by an altruistic feeling becomes an indefatigable worker and every exercise of his noble feeling in face of great obstruction makes that feeling stronger and stronger every day. Such a great soul never gives up his noble work in disgust. It is impossible for him to injure it.

A STUDENT,—This definition of altruistic or higher feeling

connotes a very noble stage of life. But still I find it difficult to understand how a person can do good without expecting a reward for it.

TEACHER.—Let me go from the known to the unknown, Do you remember a recent incident when you came running from the field, where you were playing and asked for water ? I was present then.

A STUDENT.—Yes, Sir. I was feeling very thirsty.

TEACHER.—You drank a glassful of water, quenched your thirst and then went back. Did you expect, from all your endeavour to get water, any satisfaction other than that of purely quenching your thirst ?

A STUDENT.—A thirsty man, Sir, is content with getting water and quenching his thirst. He seeks thereby no other satisfaction.

TEACHER.—An altruistic man or one possessed of a higher desire is similarly content with mere satisfaction of it. It is reported of President Abraham Lincoln that once he passed by a big pool of water in which an animal was in danger of being drowned. Its struggles and shrieks were painful. The President spontaneously felt an urge and plunged into the water to save it. He rescued it. Somebody asked him as to why he did so. He said that the sight of the animal in the throes of death was unbearable for him. He found relief and satisfaction in saving the animal. His mercy expected or sighed for no return.

A STUDENT.—Please give us more examples.

TEACHER.—It comes in the life of Mahatma Vidya Sagar, as I have told you before in the course of some other talks, that while promenading by the bank of a river he saw seated on a bench a man whose attitude betokened deep agony. The sight of so much misery holding in its torturous grip a fellow human soul produced a vivid reaction in the Mahatma's heart. He went and sat by the side of the miserable man. Gradually he found out that the ancestral house of the agonised soul was to be auctioned the next day in execution of a decree of the amount of some thousands. The poor man had incurred debt on the marriage of his daughter. As he was not able to pay even interest, the suit was filed and decree passed. A sob tore out of his heart when he said that it was his great desire to die

under the ancestral roof where his father had breathed his last.

Mahatma Vidya Sagar found relief and joy only when he paid a cheque to the Judge whom he knew, under a vow of secrecy, to release the house. Next day, the debtor went trembling to the court and he was informed that his decretal amount had been paid. The man was simply taken aback and it was later that he came to know the identity of his unknown benefactor.

Did not the Mahatma find contentment and relief in the mere satisfaction of his noble feeling of mercy and sympathy? He (the debtor) was not even personally known to the Mahatma. There was none to witness the noble act. Even the Judge was pledged to secrecy. This is why I said that an altruistic feeling finds contentment in its own satisfaction.

A STUDENT.—I have seen a man. He has founded a good institution. He has invested a large amount as its capital fund. The institution is doing any amount of good to the people. By this time, hundreds of homes have profitted by it. But this generous man, before investing his hard earned money in this good work, put in a definite condition that the institution may be named after him. Hence the institution stands in his name. Was he really an altruistic soul?

TEACHER.—No, he was not.

A STUDENT.—Why, Sir?

TEACHER.—Because to expect a return in the form of a name for a good work, makes one a bargainer. This is a commercial spirit or 'shop mentality', and not an altruistic force.

A STUDENT.—Suppose, a man does not want a name. He merely insists upon a tablet being put in there just to mention the gift. Is such a man altruistic?

TEACHER.—No, he is not.

A STUDENT.—I went to a big medical institution. I found there a big tablet on which names of the subscribers were mentioned who had donated a fixed handsome amount. I was told that the Government had announced the names of such persons who had contributed the amount as desired by the Government. Can such persons be called altruistic?

TEACHER.—An altruistic person is one who expects nothing

but the satisfaction of his higher or altruistic feeling. If any person is persuaded to donate a good sum at the instance of a government official, because he cannot afford to displease him, he shows a spirit of bargain. His donation is just a sop to a powerful person to blunt his weapon of vengeance.

A STUDENT.—A man of our community paid fifty thousand rupees to a Deputy Commissioner who wanted to open in his district a big institution. The idea was patronised by his immediate boss. The Deputy Commissioner suggested to a wealthy man that such a charity would definitely get him a reward here, though it would bring him blessings in life after death also. He paid the amount. He satisfied a great need. He earned blessings. But what pleased him most was that he was made a Rai Bahadur. Was he not a good man ?

TEACHER.—He decidedly did a good act. He satisfied a great need. But he purchased a title with that amount. The exchange was clear. The bargain was open and definite. He did this in a commercial spirit. He did a good act, no doubt. But he did not get the value of his price. He got a title but not the nobility of his heart.

A STUDENT.—Sir, what do you mean by saying that he got a title but not the nobility of his heart ?

TEACHER.—He fed love of name and not his altruistic feeling. His desire for name was fed fat. His higher feeling of unselfish service was starved. *He did a noble act. But he did not become himself noble.*

A STUDENT.—I understand you, Sir. Man gains in nobility by feeding altruistic forces. If he does a charitable act and thereby feeds low-love of name, fame, etc., his act is good and may benefit others but it would not develop his higher love of unselfish service.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. *The supreme gain of every man is the evolution of altruistic feelings in him. That alone truly builds his soul life and unfolds his higher nature.* He is a foolish person who uses his thought and energies in feeding various low-loves. He may gain the world—which too is doubtful—but he definitely loses his true gain—the nobility of his life or the demands of his soul. By all his labours, he gets a net result of low-life. Can there be a greater punishment ?

A STUDENT.—None. But suppose, Sir, a man opens a good

institution expecting nothing in his life but to get a good return in the next birth or in heaven. Does he not become altruistic ?

TEACHER.—When a man expects a return here or hereafter, he bargains. His spirit is a commercial spirit. He is a shop-keeper.

A STUDENT.—Is it not almost impossible for any man to expect no return for his good acts.

TEACHER.—It is not impossible. What I want to impress upon you is the fact that an altruistic feeling finds satisfaction in its own exercise. It can expect no return. It kills selfishness and therefore removes the possibility of bargain. We see because we have eyes, and not because we expect a return; we eat to appease hunger, not to win applause; we drink water to quench thirst and not to get appreciation; in the same way a merciful man serves others just because the urge of mercy is there and not because he expects a return in appreciation, plaudits, public recognition, a title, a prize, a seat in heavens etc. Theodore Parker possessed mercy for slaves. He fought for them. He received jeers, ridicule, abuses and even prosecution. But all that did not lead him to give up the cause of slaves. His mercy grew stronger with opposition. He did not live to see slaves emancipated but he died working for them. He possessed an altruistic feeling. A person is said to possess an altruistic feeling only when he is ready to give all his energies for it and with age and time he grows stronger and stronger in altruism.

A STUDENT.—Will you please give more illustrations ?

TEACHER.—There is the life-story of a Christian missionary who resigned his job. He went and worked as a cooly on a port from where ships sailed out and sailed in. He earned good wages daily. He worked for years there and all these years he devoted in removing the misery of the starving and suffering humanity. He lived in slums and worked in slums. Sometimes he had to walk miles with meals to feed a sick family. He was justly counted by the poor as a guardian angel. He grew old. He had a serious motor accident. He was instantly taken to a hospital. It was then that the public came to know that the angel was a patient in the hospital. Thousands of poor men, women and children assembled there and wept for him. This angel was a merciful man. He had shunned everything worldly



—name, fame, position, power, title, good salary—and buried himself in the slums to serve the suffering humanity. He possessed an altruistic force. This force grew over-powering by constant exercise.

A STUDENT—A fine instance this !

TEACHER—Indeed so. Altruism is more than even mother's love. Mothers often have an adulteration of the hope of a good return in old age. Altruism expects no return for self. It is fatal to selfishness.

A STUDENT—What a glorious force ! But your definition is a bit strained one. If we give all to please our God and win heavens, do we not become altruistic ?

TEACHER.—Decidedly not. An altruistic feeling does not expect a return of winning pleasure of God or man. It does not long for a place in a king's palace or heavens. All such considerations or longings savour of self. All this is selfishness. How can selfishness be a trait of altruism ? It is an enemy of altruism. An altruistic force when sufficiently developed would not aim at winning applause of any being or world appreciation or hallelujah of angles. It is deaf to all appeals except to the demand of its own satisfaction. It seeks satisfaction in its own gratification.

A STUDENT.—A wonderful feeling ! He is indeed most blessed who develops altruistic force. But, Sir, I have one question to ask : If a man spends nearly all his money in founding and working a hospital opened by him to perpetuate the memory of his wife, does he not thereby display the possession of altruistic feeling ?

TEACHER.—Let me tell you once for all that altruism necessarily passes beyond the borders of self. This plant does not grow where man is led by happiness derived by inferior attachment. It sprouts in the field of otherism, i.e., only when one feels for somebody with whom he is not bound by love of happiness. One is bound with wife and children by love of happiness. Hence he who spends money out of love of his wife manifests love for his own mate and not others. Such a person would establish an institution and work it only by a low-love. But when some person possesses consciousness of the pain of others, sorrow of others, misery of others, needs of others and is moved to

alleviate or remove all that without expecting any return in the form of prize, appreciation, plaudits, powers, position, name, fame or any heavenly pleasures and in doing so he voluntarily undergoes sacrifices of money, energy etc., and is content with the mere satisfaction of that noble feeling of his, he is said to be altruistic.

A STUDENT.—You know, Sir, that the immortal architectural work—the Taj—was built by an emperor on the tomb of his beloved wife. Does not the magnitude of the achievement make him altruistic ?

TEACHER.—The work achieved is immortal. It represents romance or great love of the loyal king for his queen. It immortalizes his name. The act is magnificent. But the motive is not altruistic. It was love of a husband for his wife and not love of a man for humanity which prompted the act. Hence, there is no question of discovering the presence of altruism there.

A STUDENT.—In our town, Sir, a man died. He willed away all his property for the good of entire humanity irrespective of caste, creed and colour. Don't you think, Sir, that he possessed altruistic feeling ?

TEACHER.—A feeling does not work sporadically. It works as every other feeling does, i.e. steadily. If there is any proof of such an expression of an altruistic feeling during his life-time, his last act would surely add splendour to it. But it should be borne in mind that the man should not have done that good act of definite service to mankind in order to win applause in this world or some return in his life after death. There are several cases which show that a man who willed away his magnificent property was not guided or impelled by an altruistic feeling. A man left all his property in trust for charitable purposes because he had no issue and he put a clause in his will that the cause opened by his trustees should be named after him. Another man willed away his huge estate for the good of all because his community did not subscribe to his rigid conditions which purported to limit their powers of using the estate for restricted charitable purposes. Out of spite, he left it for the world just to punish his community. In my own community, issueless fathers will gift away properties to build a well when already scores of wells exist, to build a dharamshala when already dharamshalas exist, to build a temple when there

are more temples than asylums for the poor etc. Tablets are put on those places as the testator had wished. All these persons have willed away their properties for the sake of name and not for help to the sick, the needy, the poor, the ignorant or the sinner. Willing away entire property does not, by itself, show the presence of an altruistic feeling.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly place before us in fewest possible words a clear definition of altruism ?

TEACHER.—By all means. Let me impress on you one fact. The conduct of a man who does good work in order to gain appreciation, name, fame or some gain in the form of title or Jagir or on condition of a tablet being put mentioning his good act, negatives the presence of an altruistic feeling in his soul. The conduct of even such a person who expects for his noble act a return, in this world or the next *in the form of getting happiness or release from pain here or hereafter*, negatives the presence of an altruistic feeling.

A STUDENT.—What kind of conduct, Sir, shows positively, the presence of an altruistic feeling ?

TEACHER.—The conduct of that person shows the presence of an altruistic feeling in him who is *affected by the pains, sorrows, sufferings and needs of others* and who *feels spontaneous urge* to remove them, *takes a practical step* in that direction, *undergoes voluntary sacrifices and surrenders for it* and *expects no return in the form of happiness here or hereafter*.

## GOOD ACTS AND GOODNESS OF SOUL

A STUDENT.—Sir, I want more light on the problems of good act and altruistic feelings. Suppose a person does not possess an altruistic feeling, but he is led by other feelings to open hospitals, schools, colleges, asylums, *ashramas* or homes, or he builds a *dharamshala*, a charitable hostel, a *gaushala*, a well or a rest house etc., does all that bless his life?

TEACHER.—If any of these acts proves really beneficial or helpful to other men or animals, it brings blessings on the man who does them, e.g., if a man opens a hospital and leaves sufficient capital for it to ensure its stability in future he really does a good act and thereby he promotes the life and the good of his soul. But if he does not confine his activities to a single impulse but devotes his energies to its welfare and well-being, and in course of time, learns to find joy in it and be content with that joy and ignores or is oblivious to the ambition of having any praise or appreciation or any return in any form, he comes in course of time to develop an altruistic feeling. In that case he would find life in that noble work and uneasiness, restlessness or pain in not doing it.

A STUDENT.—Do you mean to say, that it is the necessary trait or characteristic of an altruistic force that it develops with practice?

TEACHER.—Yes. If a man really possesses in his heart an altruistic force and is devoted to its service and its satisfaction, he is bound to deepen it with every exercise.

A STUDENT.—There are men, who have put in practically all their youthful years in the service of a good institution (say an orphanage) and yet have grown either indifferent or hostile to it if they are deprived of the honorary position they held. Why does such a catastrophe happen?

TEACHER.—Money is not the only return for a good work

which vitiates the growth of an altruistic feeling. Authority or position as a return also vitiates it. Those who are appointed honorary magistrates devote a lot of their time to it because it brings them power, position and influence. Desire for power position and influence is also a low desire. It is based on self and fed by self. Again, if a man has worked as an honorary superintendent of a *gaushala* and is gratifying thereby his desire for name or fame, he is really corrupting the fount of altruism. If he is deprived of that position, he would crumble and lose all interest in the noble act. If he is a still more degraded man, he would find joy in wishing and hearing ill of it. If he is revengeful, he would endeavour to ruin it.

A STUDENT.—What a horrible attitude of a man apparently devoted to a good work!

TEACHER.—Indeed so. It is a privilege to do a good and noble work. It is a still greater privilege to pass one's whole life in it. *A milk-seller who sells genuine milk is any times better than a genuine butcher, though both of them do their work for money.* A good work honestly done for a return in the form of money, position, fame, name, power, influence, etc., showers blessings on a man. A doctor who charges money for his service, but is honest and sympathetic and gives the full value in the form of his services for the money he gets, betters his soul and is a positive boon to mankind. *Good work honestly done ennobles a man* and proves him a blessing for others. And a good work done out of the altruistic feelings brings a measure of good to soul which is simply incalculable.

A STUDENT.—Sir, this raises another question in my mind. Is it possible for a man to devote his whole life to a noble cause for some return, and yet to grow callous or indifferent to it?

TEACHER.—Yes. It is not only possible but it is what actually happens. You know that Government pensioners who were known as devoted employees, forget all about the work and grow completely indifferent to it as soon as they retire.

A STUDENT.—Such persons, Sir, are absolutely worldly. They never did a good act out of a feeling that it was good. They were wage earners. Quill driving or passing judgements etc., are

not noble acts specially when done for wages. I am speaking of those who have been attached to some work of public good receiving no money or return as wages.

TEACHER.—I know of persons who have worked as secretaries, managers, superintendents etc., of positively charitable institutions, and who grew indifferent and sometimes hostile to it merely because they had ceased to be in that position in that work. Some of them went so far as to open institutions rival to the ones they had parted from. Some of them grow sulky, irritable and even rowdy when you talk to them of the institutions to which they originally belonged.

A STUDENT.—Don't you think, Sir, that the past services of such persons to that noble cause go in vain, when they make a direct or indirect attempt to harm it ?

TEACHER.—Yes, they do. Honorary jobs of such persons to such good and noble institutions bring them a basketful of dead sea fruits because of their low nature. They get a mouthful of ashes when they eat them.

A STUDENT.—It would have been, in that case, better for such persons if they had not associated with such noble institutions.

TEACHER.—You are wrong. Association with a noble work is a proud privilege of every man. It is not the association with that good work which harms them. It is the poison they wring out of this nectar which affects them so adversely.

A STUDENT.—I do not follow you, Sir.

TEACHER.—When our system goes wrong, it converts even food into poison. A person suffering from dysentery would squeeze out of solid food nothing but poison. A person suffering from typhoid would derive out of spiced food a near approach to death. It is a diseased body which reaps a bad return out of healthy food. In the same way, a diseased soul draws out of the nectar of noble work the poison of evil life. Imagine a man attached to the noble work of housing the orphans or the aged or the lepers. Suppose, instead of finding joy in ministering to them, he greases his palm with soiled money or he uses them as a means to personal benefit or develops a feeling of bossing over them or gets hungry of praise for the work done. Such an unfortunate person really

develops an evil side of his life. Finding frustration of any one of such evil feelings, he would cast off the noble work as a worn out coat or shoe and would never so much as cast a glance towards it.

A STUDENT.—What dreadful fate for a man ! The food itself poisons him to death.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Hence all such men who are associated with any noble institution have to be made aware that they do not by such an association develop vanity, self-love, selfishness, self-will etc. Each one of them would not only degrade their life but would ultimately rob them of the blessings of such an association. Our society constantly sounds a note of warning to all those associated with any branch of good work of the Dev Samaj.

A STUDENT.—How strange, Sir, that man should die of starvation in the presence of the richest stock of grains ! Noble work is a food for soul. But in the well-stocked granary of life a low man dies of soul-starvation.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Man, as he is made, lives ordinarily for his own happiness. In all relations of his, he is governed by the motive of gaining pleasure and avoiding pain. With his parents even, he is bound by these ties. With his wife and children, he is united by these ties. With the good work also, he is associated on the basis of pleasure and pain. Hence when he ceases to get pleasure out of a thing he casts it off as an untouchable thing. A hospital gives him pleasure of name and fame. If he gets pain out of it or gets no pleasure of name and fame, he shelves it aside. An orphanage gives him pleasure of good work or praise in his community. If he fails to get that, he renounces his connections with it. A school or college gives him pleasure or power. If he is deprived of that power and gets no pleasure, he severs all connections with it. Such a person belongs to none. He is loyal only to his little self.

A STUDENT.—What a loyalty is this, Sir ! It is the bountiful source of all infidelities. Loyalty to a noble cause has a wonderful flavour about it as it strengthens the cause. Loyalty to self emits stinking odours which deaden all that is good and noble in man. Loyalty to self or selfishness is loyalty to stinking mud.

TEACHER.—True. No good work is safe in the hands of such persons. No good work even opened by them is safe in their hands. A person actually opened a hospital. It was to win public applause. But when it brought him no appreciation, he closed it down. One very flourishing institution was about to be closed down because the big contributor wanted his own voice to over-rule all. It was a voice of a rich man, no doubt, but it was not that of an enlightened man. He knew as little of the work of that institution as a novice. But because he had founded it, he wanted his voice in every phase and aspect of it. It is good that good sense came to him. The institution was saved by the intervention of highest Government official there, whom that rich man respected. Even the noblest work is not safe in the hand of a selfish, vain, self-willed or low man.

A STUDENT.—How terrible this !

TEACHER.—Indeed so. To be a low man is in itself the highest punishment for man. Low life is a diseased life. It vitiates everything. By vitiating others, it vitiates itself more. Thus a vicious circle exists and deepens soul-darkness and soul-degradation.

A STUDENT.—In that case, Sir, liberation from self-love is most essential.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Self is not only fatal to altruism but it is fatal to noble institutions too.

A STUDENT.—You call self-love a diseased state of soul !

TEACHER.—Yes.

A STUDENT.—Why do you call it a diseased state of soul ?

TEACHER.—It weakens moral life in man. It saps soul-vitality. It develops suitable soil for various low-loves and low-hates. It makes human heart unfit for the growth of higher life. It thus deepens soul-darkness and soul-degradation. If this condition continues unchecked it proves a menace to the very life and vitality of soul.

A STUDENT.—Why are we not warned against such dangers by parents, teachers and others ?

TEACHER.—They ordinarily are not aware of such dangers. They are not conscious of the horrors of them. They do not realize that they rob a man not only of his dignity as a



soul but of the blessings of soul-knowledge and soul evolution which constitute the only and supreme goal of every fit man.

A STUDENT.—How blessed are they who live in an atmosphere where such teachings are being imparted and a noble life is being evolved !

## VARIOUS KINDS OF GOOD

A STUDENT.—I have come to realize that if a person does any act by which he promotes the welfare of others, removes the pain and suffering of others, establishes some institution for the intellectual welfare of others, reserves an adequate amount for some research work to be done in any department of the well-being of human or sub-human kingdoms, aids any reformatory work etc., he thereby not only does good to others but benefits his most precious part of the soul. I have also come to realize that good act does not necessarily connote an altruistic feeling. In the world many good acts of public welfare are being done by persons whose sole motive is to win applause, appreciation, name, title or satisfaction of some of their other wordly desires or some reward after death. All such persons are bargainers. They are not altruistic or even possessed of any higher feeling. But will you kindly draw a distinction between altruistic feeling and altruistic love ?

TEACHER.—Altruistic love is a mighty force. When it dominates a man, it over-rides all other happiness-based loves and keeps the blessed possessor so very busy that it becomes his second nature to serve his cause regularly, untiringly and unsparingly.

A STUDENT.—Higher love is indeed the crown and glory of a human soul. But what is meant by an altruistic feeling ?

TEACHER.—*An altruistic feeling is a stage in the evolution of an altruistic love.* An altruistic feeling leads a person to bestir himself in the service of others—such others with whom he is not in any way connected by ties of happiness, viz., parents, wife, children etc. He is moved to remove their sickness, pain or suffering. He is moved to remove mental darkness of others. He is moved to open schools and colleges for the good of others., He is moved to agitate against an evil custom, trad-

ition etc. In doing all this, he expects no return here or hereafter. In doing all this he sacrifices *some* money, *some* property, *some* bodily energy, *some* of his mental powers and knowledge.

A STUDENT.—So persons guided by an altruistic feeling *do not go the whole way* in order to subscribe to the good of others. They do want to sacrifice and surrender their powers and possessions *but only to some extent*. But even with such a limitation, they are many times better than those who live only for themselves.

TEACHER.—Indeed they are. There was a speculator. He was quite a successful man. In a speculation deal a young man lost all his property to him. This youngman was an honourable man. He paid every pie. But that paralysed his life. He had married only a few months before. He was anxious to rebuild his business. He could do so by the mercy of the speculator. The speculator always posed as the steel-hearted businessman and he turned down his request. But later on his higher feeling asserted itself. It troubled him. He at once sent money anonymously to the young man through a broker. The young man tided over his misfortune. The wheel of fortune took a happy turn. He earned a good deal and wanted to return the obligation of the broker. It was then that he knew who the benefactor was. This kind act of the otherwise hardened speculator so deeply moved this young man that he journeyed to his place of residence and apologised to him for the hard words he had used against him in his presence on the false impression that his benefactor possessed a heart of flint. This business man possessed a kind feeling but not an altruistic love.

A STUDENT.—Even this one act of such a man is ennobling.

TEACHER.—Altruistic feelings produce many such urges and lead sometimes to many such noble acts.

A STUDENT.—Kindly give us a few more instances.

TEACHER.—During a Christmas, a mother and her child were passing through a bazar where Christmas presents were exhibited for sale. The child pointed to a good toy. The mother was poor. She could not afford to purchase it. She humoured the child by telling him that Santa Claus would bring the toy to their home. Another young girl who had saved money for Christmas celebrations heard this. Her altruistic feeling

was awakened. She approached the child and said, "Father Santa Clus has sent me to get you the toy. He has also asked me to give something to your mother." So saying, she took down their address. She paid money and gave the address to the shop-keeper to send the things to the addressee in time. The mother of this child understood the young girl's kindness. Tears streamed down her eyes when she said, "May you be blessed for having blessed a child and his mother!" This was purely an unselfish act. It showed the presence of an altruistic or higher feeling.

A STUDENT.—A good act done out of some higher feeling is indeed a great act. I remember to have read about Mahatma Vidya Sagar's mother, who, during her days of poverty, was approached by a begger woman with a baby in her lap. Both of them had sparse clothing. She was so much moved that she went inside, brought her only quilt and put it on the mother and the child. For this most generous and kind act she had to pass shivering nights as she had no other quilt. This gives a clear proof of a higher feeling.

TEACHER.—True. I read a true incident which happened in the life of a European lady which she herself described. The parents of a four years old girl died. The neighbours decided to send her to an orphanage. A lady volunteered to take the child, at her own expense, to some distant place where an orphanage existed. This was a good act. On the way this good woman had to halt at a friend's house. During the course of her conversation, she spoke to her hostess how the child was unhappily situated. The child had no clothes. The hostess' heart was moved. She asked her guest to leave the child with her so that she may get the dresses made for her. The child was to be sent after a week to the orphanage. On the last day of her stay, the little orphan girl-child was heard by the hostess weeping and saying, "If I had a mummy!" The hostess broke into tears. She went to the child and said, "I am your mummy. Will you stay with me?" The girl ran into her lap sobbing out of joy. She lived with the hostess and her husband for many years. She proved a real daughter to them.

A STUDENT.—What a blessed woman!

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Every noble act done out of noble feelings blesses him who gives and blesses him who

receives. Higher feelings overcome many a bad feeling. There was a false and mischievous agitation started against the head of an institution by some men who were blinded by political and sectarian fanaticism. This agitation took a monstrous form. The leaders of a political party who were invited to agitate against that head did not care so much as to enquire whether the propaganda was true or absolutely false. One of the political leaders happened to come to that institution and without knowing who the target of the agitation was, went unknowingly into the office of the head and enquired about the office of the agitators. This leader was an old man. The day was hot. His face showed signs of tiredness. This external condition of the old man moved the heart of this persecuted head. He at once asked his subordinate to look after the needs of this old man. He had a cold bath. He was served with good and wholesome food. He then retired for sleep. At 4 P.M., a man was sent with him to take him to the enemy's camp. By some chance that leader came to know that his host was the man against whom his services were requisitioned. Naturally, he was astonished and he refused to speak against him.

Here the head of the institution happily possessed kindness. This feeling compelled him to serve the old and tired human being even though he was invited to persecute him. Good feelings spell the death of bad feelings.

A STUDENT.—How very necessary it is, Sir, to possess good feelings !

TEACHER.—Good feelings are so rare that there is almost a famine of them in the world. Selfishness rules and it takes no count of others.

A STUDENT.—A feeling that kills altruism or higher feelings is indeed a most reprehensible feeling.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Selfishness is the most deplorable feeling. It is altruism alone that would sound the death-knell of selfishness. This is why our society day and night emphasizes the need of cultivation and growth of the beautiful and glorious higher feeling or higher love.

A STUDENT.—Kindly relate some instances of other higher altruistic feelings.

TEACHER.—A Judge of a Supreme Court was trying a case

of high treason. The accused pleaded guilty. Something in the demeanour of the accused dug out from his memory an incident, perhaps thirty years old, of the positive service that the accused had done to him. The accused did not recognise the Judge. But the Judge recognised him soon. Both were, a generation ago, students of the same institution. The patriot and now an accused person was even then a very noble soul. The Judge then was a very mischievous boy. He was guilty of an act which produced a sensation and turmoil in the class room. The teacher had just then gone out. When he came in, he scented the whole thing and foolishly considered the good boy guilty of it. He however, knew that the good boy would not tell a lie. He, said, "Were you guilty of the act ?" The boy replied "No, Sir." The teacher again asked, "Do you know who did it ?" He replied, "Yes, Sir." "Then out with the name, please !" The teacher demanded. The boy said boldly that he would not betray a class-fellow. Upon this, the good boy was given a severe thrashing. But he calmly bore it but did not betray his class-mate to save his skin. Years passed. The good boy became an unselfish patriot. And the guilty boy rose to be the Judge.

The sudden memory of that act swept over the Judge. His pen refused to work. He had to ride nearly one hundred miles to see the supreme head of the Government. He narrated to him the whole story. He begged for a reprieve. The head was perceptibly moved. He signed the reprieve. The Judge returned with that reprieve. He pronounced judgment but gave the accused the signed order of the reprieve. Gratitude performed this miracle. Gratitude is a higher feeling. Such a higher feeling makes the blessed possessor to feel his benefactor as a creditor whose debt of service he must pay by adequate services.

A STUDENT.—Are mercy and gratitude the only altruistic feelings ?

TEACHER.—Of course not. There are good many other higher feelings. Feeling of justice is an altruistic feeling. It comes in the life of a great Indian political leader that when he rose to be an eminent lawyer he paid off a debt incurred by his father, even though barred by time-limit. He did not want to deprive another of his right because the law protected him.

Sense of justice leads a man to respect the life and rights of others. The amount was paid to the creditor silently and privately. The lawyer found contentment in the satisfaction of his sense of justice.

A STUDENT.—I wish, Sir, there were more men possessed of this higher feeling or higher sense. World is full of persons who apply their sharp intellect and experience in depriving others of their rights. I know a man who found joy in retaining four hundred rupees which were given to him by mistake by a bank cashier. He went to his bank. The cashier of the bank paid him notes of the amount of four hundreds in excess by mistake. He received them, went away happy and loudly denied having got the amount when the poor clerk ran to his house for return of the excess received by him. This broke down the poor clerk.

One day I went for a walk. I found a deserted village. There were several tombs there but only one house. I enquired about the cause of the village having been deserted. I was told that some ruffians attacked that village, robbed and killed men. The survivors grew panicky and left the village *en masse*. Such cases are plentiful. A man giving back a time-barred debt to a creditor of his father is rare indeed.

TEACHER.—In our society such instances happen almost in every session of our Higher Life Training Academy or *Satsang* gatherings. Cases after cases have occurred when men have not only paid time-barred debts but even paid back the amounts to the original owners and their heirs whom they had defrauded before they came in contact with our society. On the 91st Birthday Anniversary of our most worshipping Guru, one person announced that he had with him about three hundred rupees belonging to others which he had not paid to them, though the amounts were due. In fact, he had not been able to make up his mind to pay. But when his sense of justice was awakened, he felt ashamed to keep others deprived of their rightful dues.

A doctor has paid back several thousands to those whom he had deprived of their just and rightful dues. A poor shop-assistant paid one hundred and fifty rupees (all his savings) to his master whom he had cheated but who was quite unaware of having been cheated. Two leading Dev Samajists were hard

put to, to find the widow whose husband had given them some credit which they had not paid back to him. The widow, after a hard search, was traced in a town where they went and found relief only when they paid her the amount. The lady had no knowledge of this debt. Her joy was therefore ineffable when in her straitened circumstances, she got this substantial amount of money. Sense of justice once awakened leaves no rest for the man unless he satisfies it.

A STUDENT.—This is splendid, Sir.

TEACHER.—In our society instances of this kind happen which are very elevating. A Dev Samajist hired a tonga. The tongawala demanded eight annas. This gentleman said in an off-hand way, "Others charge six annas only !" The tongawala believed this and agreed to charge six annas. As soon as this gentleman got into the tonga and it drove to his house, his higher sense began to trouble him. He said to the tongawala, "Please, stop. I was not just to you when I said other tongawalas charged six annas only. I had had no talk with any other tongawala. You believed my wrong statement. I am feeling unhappy. Take these ten annas. You had demanded eight annas. That amount you must have. I fine myself two annas for having dealt unfairly with you."

Such instances are plentiful in the life of our most worshipful Guru. Once our Master saw a labourer standing, doing nothing and he inferred that he was idling away his time. In reality that labourer was most honest. He was resting after a fatigue. When Bhagwan came to know of this, he felt pained and paid that labourer higher wages to atone for what Bhagwan believed as unjust opinion of him. The labourer was ignorant of all this. Others had no knowledge that Bhagwan had made some inference about him. And yet the supreme sense of justice of Bhagwan atoned to the man for mere mental inference.

It happened in the life of Bhagwan that a hill-man sought services under him. After a week or so, he stopped coming. Bhagwan had to send his men to comb the villages around. They found the hill-man and paid him for the days he had worked. Bhagwan was any times more anxious to pay to the runaway hill-man for the days he had served him than even the hill-man himself was anxious about his dues.



Such instances can be multiplied.

A STUDENT.—Sense of justice indeed is an altruistic force. I wish all human souls possessed it and then there would be no transgressions. It is the absence of this sense which underlies transgressions, oppressions, breaches of faith etc., Can you kindly define what constitutes injustice ?

TEACHER.—When a person trespasses on the rights of some man or animal in order to satisfy his feeling of pleasure or remove his want, he becomes guilty of injustice. The sin of such a trespasser becomes more grievous when he believes it to be right and proper and he upholds it. A man is said to possess sense of justice when he sees an individual or a community trespassing on the birth-rights of men and animals and stands up against that injustice. He does not care what struggles he has to make, what adversities he has to face, what sacrifices he has to undergo, to see that justice is done to others. It is the efforts and struggles of these noble souls which bring about reformation in governments, societies, homes and individuals.

A STUDENT.—Am I to understand, Sir, that those who faced odds to stop *Sati*, enforced widowhood, child-marriage, infanticide etc., stood up against injustice ?

TEACHER.—Yes, they did. Injustices are rampant, so wide and so deep that we need millions to rise against them and thus remove the agonies of men bruised and crushed under them. Happiness-drunken man is blind to others—their rights, their honour, their life, their feelings etc. Like a mad elephant he crushes under his feet the birth-right of men and animals.

There are other higher feelings too, e.g., sense of duty; sense of discipline; reverence; generosity; unselfish higher service, etc.—that is the whole gamut of altruistic feelings.

## THE HIGHEST GOOD

A STUDENT.—Are all higher forces of the same nature and same value ?

TEACHER.—All altruistic forces or motivations have one trait in common. They are all *other-seeking*. Hence they are qualitatively distinguishable from all self-seeking forces or motivations. All higher forces have one end in view and that is of adding to another's joy, relieving another's misery or pain, removing another's want, feeling indebted to another's favours, appreciating another's higher virtues, proving loyal to one's duty towards others, standing against injustice to the weak and oppressed—in fact no thought of self enters in these motivations. They find contentment in the gratification of their altruistic feeling. They build the vitality or constructive power of their soul.

But their importance is not the same. Some are limited to service of the physical side of man's life. Some are limited to the mental side of man's life. Some are limited to the social-welfare side of man. Some are limited to the moral-welfare side of man. Some minister to the highest soul-welfare of man.

A STUDENT.—Kindly illustrate them.

TEACHER.—There used to be a generous and charitable-minded man in my province who was deeply touched by the sight of the famine-stricken people. It was a heavenly joy for him to purchase heaps of grain for relieving their need. In fact it used to give him the greatest amount of joy. But he started no educational institution, though he spent huge amounts on that charitable relief work. He started no hospital. The sight of the hungry and the naked alone stirred his heart.

I met another philanthropic person. His longing was to remove the distress of child-bearing women. He gave a huge amount for maternity welfare. He was not enthusiastic about

mental welfare of the illiterate and the down-trodden.

Mahatma Vidyasagar was deeply stirred by the sight of the suffering of the depressed and down-trodden widows.

There are some amongst us Indians nowadays who have made it a mission of their life to raise the social and economic life of the depressed classes or *Harijans*.

In my native town, a *sadhu* made it a mission of his life to serve cows. He started and has run for the last several years a *gaushala*.

In Bombay, a vegetarian society has been organised in order to stop killing of animals for food. It is spending a good deal of energy and money in this good task.

Near our place lived a man who worked and died for the great work of emancipating persons from drunkenness.

Sir Ganga Ram felt for widows and started institutions for them, felt for the aged and founded a home for them. He also provided for the sick by founding a good hospital.

The Arya Samaj has established an orphanage at Ferozepore. All those who have worked it with truly sympathetic feelings have honoured themselves.

These and similar various good acts done out of good feelings touch the physical side of man's life.

A STUDENT.—Are they, therefore, in any way less valuable ?

TEACHER.—Let me tell you once for all that every higher feeling is good producing, hence worthy of our deep regard. It is life-building, hence very valuable. But all higher feelings have some goal touching the welfare of human and sub-human kingdoms. Whosoever helps the physical side necessarily renders a less valuable service than those who help mental, social or moral side of the human kingdom. The most valuable service is rendered by one who serves that most essential side of human life, i.e., his soul.

A STUDENT.—Please give examples.

TEACHER.—It is said of one multi-millionaire of America that he subscribed millions to make all education free in his native place. He thus gave the highest impetus to the cause of literacy and educational culture of his land. By his such munificence, he served the minds of men—a better part of their being than their body. One characteristic which distinguishes a man from a beast in his rationality. He who serves the rational

part of man is a better servant than one who feels for and serves the body and bodily needs of man.

A STUDENT.—Those, therefore, who possess the higher feeling of sympathy for satisfying intellectual wants are better than those whose sympathy is confined to the removal of bodily ills.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. Higher than these are those who rise against social injustices or evils which vitiate life of individuals and communities. Those who stood up against slavery were indeed higher in their contribution than the above two groups of noble souls. They who had the noble feeling to fight against *sati*, enforced widowhood, child-marriage etc., belonged to this noble category. Evil social customs eat like cancer in the bones of a nation. They paralyse the whole group. Hence their removal is an urgent necessity. They who succumb to these evils without making any effort at their removal or impudently support them are the moral imbeciles or moral lunatics of society. They are standing menace to the cause of social welfare.

A STUDENT.—Are there other higher causes which are still more noble than the above ?

TEACHER.—The highest cause relates purely to soul-life.

A STUDENT.—Kindly make this clear.

TEACHER.—One lady came to see me. Her father was a very wealthy man. Her father-in-law also left a very rich heritage. On both sides she was in the lap of luxury. She did not need the mercy of anybody. Beside this, she was highly educated and cultured. Her husband had received foreign education. He drew a very fat salary. She, therefore, needed no magnificently generous man to meet her educational needs. She had broken social chains of injustice and oppression. She was not in need of the help of a great reformer. While opening her mind, she once said to me, "I have everything the world longs for. But I am denied the peace of mind. My home life is almost wrecked. For the last over twenty years, my husband and myself have estranged relations. I am living and moving like a white sepulchre. Who can realize that there is a dark skeleton in the cupboard of our life ?"

Now tell me what was it that she needed most ?

A STUDENT.—She needed, Sir, light to find her way out of the maze.

TEACHER.—True. She did not know what ailed her and what ailed her husband. In fact, what she suffered from was vanity and want of gratitude. She had the largest memory for her husband's defects and none for his virtues. In fact, the bone of contention between the two was the education of their children. The husband being far more enlightened knew better how to educate his children. The mother resisted him at every step and turned away all children from him. Even this much wrong which she did to her husband was not visible to her. The husband gave all his money and attention to his family. The wife could not appreciate even this palpable service. Hence spiritual darkness about her inner life stood in her way of happy adjustment with her husband. She needed soul-light.

A STUDENT.—Have you personal experience of such a light ?

TEACHER.—Yes, I have quite a lot of it. There is still alive a couple in our society. If you see them now you would conclude that you have seen a most loving couple. And yet only four or five years ago, you would have found the wife being beaten so often and shedding bitterest tears and preferring death to her miserable life. The husband was blind as a soul. The wife was blind as a soul. None of them could spot the disease and apply ointment. They got the light. They saw their own selfishness and their own part of the blame. They saw each other's virtues and services. They grew closer to each other on account of the feeling of appreciation and gratitude which they developed. The husband has so many times wept at the memory of the wrongs he did to his wife. His wife admits her part and apologises to her husband. Lower life having subsided and higher forces having awakened in them, both are happy, contented and mutually serviceable.

A STUDENT.—How blessed is such a light which can reveal to us our wrong life and which creates abhorrence for it and awakens us to the beauty, glory and necessity of higher force.

TEACHER.—True. It was in the year 1928 or 1929 that I saw an old man. He had passed many long years of his life in one or another sect. He enjoyed good practice and earned a lot. But he neglected soul-life. Soul-darkness had driven him and three other members of his family into such a miserable

plight that every one of them wanted to run away from home. The mother had become so desperate that she intended to commit suicide. They had all that one wants in world—money, house and position. But they were miserable because they were spiritually diseased.

A STUDENT.—How were they diseased ?

TEACHER.—They were diseased because they possessed low-loves and low-hates.

A STUDENT.—Please explain this :

TEACHER.—When a man is so dominated by a desire for his own happiness as to grow blind to the happiness of others and tries to have it even at the cost of another's happiness, he is said to be diseased or insane. This gentleman was greedy. If any day he earned less than he expected to get, he would grow sulky, peevish, miserable and relieve his evil temper by rating his family as if they were responsible for his less income. It was no satisfaction for him that he had earned for his needs. He wanted more because he was greedy. That man is indeed insane who longs for money for its own sake. Money is a means. He made it into an end. Such insanity is a moral disease.

A STUDENT.—Did he suffer from anything else ?

TEACHER.—Yes. He could not recognise that others exist who possess feelings. He wanted all to pander him while he was to ride rough on them. This produced disharmony. Not only did his dependents suffer but he too was miserable.

A STUDENT.—How did he get cured ?

TEACHER.—He came and lived in the most holy atmosphere of our society. The wrong side of his own life dawned on him. He came to realize where he was wrong. The revived memory of the injustices which he had done to his dearest ones, tormented him. He burst into tears. His revived memory of the services which his family people had done to him, softened his heart. He reprimanded himself and grew closer to them. He went so far as to place his hoary head at his daughter-in-law's feet. This was too much for the girl. She wept. The blessed tears washed away the filth of estranged feelings and evil wishes. It is now one of the happiest families. Selfish forces make us blind and insane and produce estrangement and agony. To impart this unique light which can remove

our blindness and cure us of our insanity born of low-loves and low-hates is indeed the holiest of the holy causes.

Hence he is doing the highest service to man who possesses the higher feeling of deep sympathy for blind and enslaved souls and is led by it to remove their soul blindness and slavery to low-loves and low-hates by means of conveying to their hearts spiritual light and power. The most painful sight of misadjusted relations is due to soul-blindness and slavery to low-loves and low-hates. The terrible reign of aggressive sins and crimes by individuals, communities, races and nations is due to the same two causes. The blind race for objects of happiness by which children of men trample upon one another to death is due to both these factors. In fact, reign of falsehood and evil is directly due to both these unhappy causes. He who helps to remove them helps mankind the most.

A STUDENT.—Indeed, this kind of service is the supreme service.

## REVERENCE FOR ALTRUISTIC MEN

A STUDENT.—Why is it, Sir, that people as a *rule do not desire* to develop unselfish feelings and in most cases fail to understand the good acts which flow out of them ?

TEACHER.—In order to desire and appreciate a noble or unselfish feeling one must possess higher reverence or *sattvik shraddha*.

A STUDENT.—What is *sattvik shraddha* ?

TEACHER.—*Sattvik shraddha* means altruistic reverence. One is said to possess it only when one is able to see the glory of such of the acts of an altruistic person which he does in the cause of the promotion of the good of human kingdom or animal kingdom or vegetable kingdom and appreciate the beauty of the sacrifices and surrenders which he makes in the furtherance of such good causes. Such a fortunate soul who possessess altruistic reverence feels an urge to sing praises of the acts of such unselfish persons and finds joy in propagating their glory and in doing so he is ready and willing to make sacrifices and surrenders of his powers and possessions.

A STUDENT.—What happens if a man is devoid of *sattvik shraddha* ?

TEACHER.—Such a man is cut off from the world of higher feelings and is blind to higher truths pertaining to them.

A STUDENT.—Do you mean that he is blind to the beauty and glory of the altruistic world ?

TEACHER.—Yes. As a physically blind person is dead to the world of physical forms and physical beauty, in the same way a vain or egoistic man is blind to the beauty of the world of soul-life or higher life.

Let me repeat a telling instance I have given you before. A very intelligent, clever, resourceful, worldly-wise, highly



placed officer often said that he was not prepared to believe that any selfless man or merciful man or charitable man existed in the world. He said further that even when they succoured a poor or starving man or helped a needy man they must have money motive behind that apparent sacrifice of money. His son who possessed the higher feeling of reverence contradicted his father very strongly. He laid before him a number of instances of selfless persons. But the worldly-wise father stood unconvinced.

A STUDENT.—This is not a solitary instance, Sir. I have come across many such instances in my town. A young man was making an outrageous statement that no woman possessed virtue of chastity. He was making this insulting statement on a junction station. Some persons gathered around him, but none dared to protest. I made bold to confront him. I said, "My friend, do you mean to say that no woman in the world is virtuous?" He said, blatantly, "Yes". "Do you make no exception?" I said. "No," he replied. "Then do you include your own mother in that category?" I demanded. He made an attempt to mutter stutter and then remained silent and went away. His vanity led him to soil his mouth by the insolent libel on woman. But when the question touched his mother's reputation, his vanity seemed to fail him. Now, this man was not able to see virtue in woman.

TEACHER.—Beauty of heart-forces can be seen only by altruistic reverence. The world of heart-forces cannot open to mere intellectuals, wealthy, worldly-wise, or clever persons, or men of power or position etc. All these gifts may well feed vanity. They cannot produce the vision of virtues. The highly placed officer I talked about, could not see the glory or even presence of viriue anywhere. But a reverential soul, even though less educated, less worldly-wise and less eminent, can see the beauty of mercy or unselfish life where it exists. Blessed, therefore, are they who are equipped with *sattvik shradha*.

A STUDENT.—Why do you call them blessed, Sir?

TEACHER.—On seeing the beauty of higher life in others, their heart bows before them in divine humility. By being reverential they become humble. Besides this, reverential hearts do not burn out of jealousy and grow vindictive when

they hear such noble souls well-spoken of, but, on the contrary join in their praise with others, even themselves enthusiastically talk in appreciative terms about them.

A STUDENT.—Do persons burn with jealousy when good men are well-spoken of?

TEACHER.—There are lots of unfortunate persons who cannot tolerate good things being said about noble souls. They rise and begin to utter denunciations in order to disparage them. They unreasonably and without provocation turn out as their bitter foes.

A STUDENT.—But why do they do so?

TEACHER.—They do so because they are dominated by vanity or egoism.

A STUDENT.—I knew that a vain or egoistic person wants all praises for himself. He falsely arrogates to himself the position of No. 1. He recognises none as his superior. An elderly man met me once and foolishly exhorted me, "Consider yourself always as No. 1 in the world! Say to yourself: 'I am the best man and all the rest are inferior to me.'"

TEACHER.—Are you No. 1? If it is so, why are you my student? If you are No. 1, show that by achievements. To wrongly consider oneself No. 1 is a sort of mania. A landlord who bore the name of a Raja of a State began to believe himself as Raja. His sycophants encouraged him in that delusion. He held court every day. He spent money like a Raja. Within a short time, facts proved the folly of his false belief. His small estate dissolved and vanished. He became a beggar. By believing himself a Raja he did not become a Raja. By believing oneself as immune from all diseases, one does not escape the revages of diseases or of time and age. Vain persons ignore the facts because they cannot see them or if they see them, they cannot accept them.

A STUDENT.—Why does a man believe that by realizing our own defects, we shall suffer spiritually and physically?

TEACHER.—There is nothing wrong in seeing our defects. On the contrary, it is one of the pre-requisites to success. You can't repair wear or tear unless you see it. But there are men who grow diffident when they face a defect. It is their diffidence which is to be remedied and not the fact of their defects. A foolish and vain man, who had learnt the above stupid

lesson of egotism, met me one day and told me that his gains in business would mount to forty or fifty thousands. Within a month or so his blindness cost him heavily. The apparent gain was an illusion. He suffered a loss of about half a lac. Those who do not keep current accounts of their gains or losses, dig the grave of their business. Same is the case with the affairs of our soul-life. If we shut our defects, it is we who suffer and not others. I know of a youth who turned out to be a leprous debauchee. He used to boast that he was above sex-attraction. Those who knew him, laughed at his bravado or his impudence. He became reckless and failed. His life is always before us as a warning and a terrible lesson. True humility is, therefore, a heavenly gift, as vanity is a calamity wrought by evil-life. There was a B.A., B.T., who came to attend our meetings. Along with him came another gentleman to our meetings. After some experience, I came to realize that the B.A., B.T. would never be a pilgrim on the path of higher life while the other man would. I gave out my opinion. I was asked to give my reasons for it. I said plainly. "The B.A., B.T. cannot see the glory of altruistic feelings. How can he feel the need of developing them?" My reading came out true. The other gentleman progressed by leaps and bounds. He made large sacrifices for the good of others. He became a permanent traveller on the path of higher life.

A STUDENT.—Sir, do you think that a man devoid of altruistic reverence is dead to the spiritual world?

TEACHER.—Indeed so.

A STUDENT.—Will you, please, shed more light on this?

TEACHER.—This is self-evident. In order to grow into higher life, we must be able to see the beauty and glory of the evolver of higher life. By uniting with him alone, we can assimilate higher life. *Life alone can generate life. Now a vain man would never be able to seek union with the Evolver of higher life.* He would never be able to see truths about higher life. He would never feel the need of fulfilling the laws and truths about higher life. In fact, he will remain imprisoned in the dark dungeon of self where light of altruism never enters. For such a person, higher life has no meaning.

A STUDENT.—What a punishment!

TEACHER.—Indeed so. How the lives devoid of this feeling

are blasted can be witnessed everyday. I saw two young men in the year 1909 or 1910—a generation ago. They were sitting in my office. They were loudly singing the praises of an oil multi-millionaire. They admired his power to pass cheques for unusual amounts, without so much as a fly-bite. I tried my best to turn the topic as I was feeling choked by the atmosphere they had created. When I failed to do so, I said, “Dear friends, Buddha kicked a throne and the cost of temples erected in his honour and sculptures cut out of mountains to illustrate his life incidents and the amounts paid in his name would over-balance perhaps the wealth of one continent.” They remained silent. But they did not appreciate my point of view. They lived to see their dream of wealth realized to some extent. But at what cost? They sacrificed their soul, their peace of mind, their higher ambitions—all that is good and fine—in their mad rush after money. They blasted all prospects of higher life. They lived in the atmosphere of greed and all the evil it connotes. They gained little, very little of the world, lost their entire future of better life and spiritual progress.

A STUDENT.—At this time, Sir, we all feel such a loss to be indeed irreparable. What a loss when the higher in man is lost and the lower in him is fed. A crowned donkey is any times inferior to a man of intellect, however poor. A man who sacrifices higher life in pursuit after material goods and thereby develops lower life is a fool, a perfect fool.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. But all this can appear bad to one who can see the need and glory of higher life. And this is possible only when one possesses altruistic reverence. There is a worker of Dev Samaj who related his own life story to me. His reverence showed him the ideal of higher life. He united himself with the Evolver of higher life. By his light, assimilated by reverential union, he realized the worthlessness of selfish or lower life. He was drawing, then, a very decent salary, as head of a department. And yet he used to weep because he was chained to lower ideals. At last, he broke the chains and for the last nearly thirty years, he is living the life of sacrifice and service. This is how reverence helped him to abjure lower ideals and to tread on the path of sacrifice and service in higher cause. What an urgent necessity, then, it is to develop *sattvik shradha* !

## DIRECT-KNOWLEDGE-GIVING CONSCIOUSNESSES

**A STUDENT.**—You have told us, Sir, that a man devoid of reverence cannot get a direct knowledge of the beauty and reality of unselfish life, nor can he see the beauty and reality of actions which result as a consequence of selfless life. Do you mean that reverence and other altruistic forces are knowledge-giving forces?

**TEACHER.**—Yes they are knowledge-producing or knowledge-imparting forces in character.

**A STUDENT.**—I have learnt upto now that we get all knowledge by means of our senses and intellect.

**TEACHER.**—That is a very limited or narrow view of it. There are at least eight groups of direct-knowledge-giving consciousnesses.

**A STUDENT.**—Can you kindly tell us what they are?

**TEACHER.**—Yes. Following are the direct-knowledge-giving consciousnesses:—

1. Several elementary consciousnesses connected with sense organs;
2. Various intellectual powers, namely, powers of conception, of memory, of imagination, of concentration, of reasoning etc.;
3. Several consciousnesses connected with the concept of "I" or "ego";
4. Lower kinds of consciousnesses of sensual feelings, namely passion or love for money or avarice, passion or love for children, passion or love for lust etc.;
5. Several aesthetic senses or consciousnesses, namely, sense of beauty, linguistic sense, sense of music, sense of order, sense of cleanliness etc.;
6. Higher consciousnesses or feelings based on justice

- including senses of duty and discipline;
7. Higher feelings of reverence, gratitude sympathy or realization of pain of others, responsiveness to the needs of others etc.; and
  8. Several kinds of highest consciousnesses or *Dev Shakties* or divine forces, namely: (1) complete love for true and only true knowledge in every department of Nature; (2) complete hatred for all kinds of falsehood pertaining to every department of Nature; (3) Complete love for all that is good or beneficial in respect of every department of Nature; and (4) Complete hatred for all kinds of wrongs or evils in relation to every department of Nature.

A STUDENT.—This is something quite new to me, Sir. Are all of these kinds of senses or consciousnesses direct-knowledge-imparting forces?

Teacher.—Yes.

A STUDENT.—Those, therefore, who get intellectual education and are satisfied with it and never come to possess moral, higher or spiritual consciousnesses, are to that extent dwarfed, stunted and poor specimen of humanity beings.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. They are not simply dwarfed and stunted, but they are diseased souls, too.

A STUDENT.—How are they diseased souls ?

TEACHER.—They develop not only intellect but lower feelings such as greed, lust, hunger for fame, name, power, position, undue attachments for wife, children, place, etc.—every one of which develops into a low-love and hence into a soul-disease.

A STUDENT.—Would you please illustrate it ?

TEACHER.—In a certain town there lived a very intelligent and highly qualified man who took to the practice of law. His brain was exceptionally sharp. He earned well as he had a roaring practice. But his passion for drinking and sex-gratification was abnormal. His occupation for the day was divided between his hours in court in order to earn money and then association with prostitutes. What knowledge can such a person have of chastity, purity, cleanliness of life, moral values, altruistic feelings, etc.! As a beast is encased in purely animal

life, so was he encompassed in purely animal and beastly life or even worse than that. He died, as he lived, a disgraceful death.

A STUDENT.—What a terrible waste of the powers of an enlightened human soul !

TEACHER.—All low-loves produce terrible wastefulness of mental and physical powers of a man and blast all his hopes of higher moral, or spiritual consciousnesses or values.

A woman went to foreign countries. She did not see the glorious side of women's life there, as she had no higher consciousness. She was deeply impressed with the sensual side of women's life. She returned to put that acquired knowledge into practice and smashed her family life, her honour, her social status and her usefulness as a decent citizen. She lived a life of an out-caste. Had she possessed any higher consciousness, she would have been impressed with the respect the foreign women possess for permanent values of life like shared home life and great enthusiasm for life of service. Absence of higher sense paved the way for her to a shattered life.

A STUDENT.—How unfortunate for a man, then, to possess *only* lower consciousnesses ?

TEACHER.—Indeed so. There was a graduate who joined our society. In our society it is incumbent on every member, besides other conditions, to be free from the sins of bribe-taking, dishonesty and adultery etc. He was then studying in law. As soon as he passed law, he put in a resignation from the membership of Dev Samaj saying that as he would have to stoop to lower things he would not be able to keep up to the high standard of character demanded by Dev Samaj. His senses showed him the importance of the money but he had no higher sense to show him the glory of honest, straight-forward, upright or noble life. Being blind to that, he sacrificed it without a pang. Being aware of the fascination of lower life, he chose to pursue it. *Our consciousnesses—higher or lower—determine the course of our life and the goods we pursue.* Hence it is the highest glory, honour and privilege of a man to possess higher feelings and it is the most terrible punishment for a man to possess only intellectual powers and lower feelings.

A STUDENT.—How unfortunate it is, then, to be a lower

soul!

TEACHER.—Indeed so. A clerk was changed in the holy atmosphere of our society. He gave up bribes-taking. This naturally decreased his income. But he was able to see in the atmosphere of our society the ugly side of dishonest life and the ugly side of ill-gotten wealth. His opposition began. It gathered strength. His soul began to get darkened and in that deplorable mood he came and saw me. "What would I gain, Sir, by being honest?" he asked. "You have already gained enough!" I said, "You have become honest!" "Is that all, Sir?" he said. "Is that not a glorious compensation?" I replied. He stood up and went away. His greed overpowered him. He sank down never to rise again to the shining world of good life.

A STUDENT.—What a loss to a man who is not able to see the glory of moral and higher life!

TEACHER.—There was a young man whom I had be-friended at some time. I left my profession and offered my humble services to my Samaj. Years after I met him when he had grown into a wealthy and important citizen. In a way, though respectful, he tried to impress on me that I had done an unwise thing in dedicating my life to the higher cause of my great society. In a way he applauded himself by trying to impress on me his wisdom. He said he had amassed enough to leave behind half a lac for every one of his sons. "How much do you expect to leave for your sons?" he asked me. I told him calmly, "I shall leave behind for my sons a heritage of an example of a life of sacrifice and service." But he could not understand me. He wisely nodded his head in a positive demur. Years after, I met him again and asked him how his sons had fared. "My sons have proved hopeless. They have given up education. They are sitting idle expecting to live on my earnings." I pitied him. I simply told him, "Remember! The highest heritage which a father should leave for his children should be a heritage of noble life, beautifully lived. Wealth, which is mostly ill-gotten or ill-earned, and is an example of greed and miserliness, is a poor and diseased heritage.

How many fathers realize that it is their greatest duty as parents to live a life of purity and service and thus place



before the budding consciousness of their children the glory of upright and selfless life. To place before their children, the glory of worldly life is in fact casting precious souls adrift on the waters of lower life and thereby dooming them to exile from the borders of moral and spiritual life.

A STUDENT.—Why do parents fail to realize the great importance of setting an elevating example of a life of purity and service before the children ?

TEACHER.—In fact, parents in such cases are themselves blind. A blind guide can never be a safe guide.

A STUDENT.—Would you, please, illustrate how higher consciousnesses open a new world of knowledge ?

TEACHER.—An actresses in Europe once wrote as to how she became a vegetarian. She said that she happened to go to a slaughter-house. The agonies of the slaughtered animals so deeply smote her heart that she renounced taking of flesh diet for ever. Here she had mercy. That feeling showed her the pain and cries of the slaughtered animals. But a man devoid of mercy feels no pain. I told you, once I met a butcher. He had slaughtered twenty animals. His body was smeared with blood stains. He said, "God be praised ! I got to-day twenty animals to slaughter." He had no mercy. Hence *the pain in the cry of the animals could neither be seen nor realized by him.*

In a certain place, woman had offered *satyagraha*. The police used *lathies*. There were men standing there. None of them moved. A young Sikh visitor, who happened to pass by that place, saw the dismal scene. He plunged into the fight. By his *lathi* he injured some of the policemen. He was however, attacked by a crowd of policemen and thrown on the ground. Moved by his heroic fight, the women, threw themselves over his prostrated body and received the *lathi* charge. Here the spontaneous act of the young Sikh showed the existence of higher feeling of mercy in his heart. *It gives one direct knowledge of the pain of others whether human beings or animals.* Those devoid of this feeling were there and could not see the pain or suffering of the women.

A STUDENT.—Or, Sir, if they saw it, they had not the courage to go to their rescue.

TEACHER.—Perhaps. A strong feeling becomes irresistible.

I was once attacked by a hen. Her chickens were passing and I did not notice them. She attacked my feet and then I became aware of the presence of her chickens. If a hen, as a mother, could attack a man, what about a man possessing a strong higher feeling. He would become desperate. If the higher feeling is sufficiently dominant, it leads a man to make desperate efforts and desperate sacrifices in order to gratify it. However, leaving that question apart, do you realize that the direct knowledge of the pain of others, sufferings of others, cries of others, need of others, favours of others, virtues of others etc., can be known only by a corresponding higher or altruistic force. Higher and altruistic forces are, therefore, in truth, knowledge-imparting forces.

A STUDENT.—Yes, Sir.

TEACHER.—The law that governs our knowledge acquired through a feeling is this : Direct knowledge about the reality of the various aspects of Nature that can be obtained by man through any particular kind of *real feeling* can be acquired only by him by means of *that and that feeling alone* and *not otherwise*.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate it ?

TEACHER.—By all means. A child of two or three years who has no attraction for money cannot realize what it is to love or lose money. He cannot know how his father thinks about acquisition of money—what thoughts crowd in his mind and what soothing or painful effects they produce on his mind. A child aged two or three years saw a bundle of notes lying beside him when his father left him for a very short while. That bundle belonged to his father. The child took the bundle of notes for papers. He flung them into the oven. He was pleased when the light blazed forth. The father returned. He saw the bundle of notes missing. He was informed how his little son had cast them in the oven. The loss of the bundle so maddened the man that he took up his baby and flung him into the oven too. How could a child without passion of money imagine this lunatic state of his father's mind ! The shock or pain which a lover of money feels cannot be directly known by one devoid of passion of money.

A boy who has not become himself a father and in whom the feeling of love for offsprings has not evolved, cannot and

does not have any direct and true knowledge of the severe shock and pain which a father, who has evolved love for his offsprings, feels when his child dies.

I had seen a young beautiful wife who was blessed with a child. The child died a month after. She was so deeply shocked that she withered away and died. I pitied her and even laughed at her stupid attachment. Many many years after I was a father. I lost a most promising son. I felt bowled out. Then I realized what the loss of an offspring means for a father attached to his own begotten children.

In the same way a person who has not developed sex-love for a woman cannot have any direct knowledge of the nature of sex-love by which a man, who has developed that passion, feels drawn towards his wife or the woman he adores. Nor can he have any direct knowledge of the pain which the latter feels when the object of his sex-love dies.

A STUDENT.—I am, then, to understand, Sir, that a world of knowledge which a feeling reveals to one man can be revealed to another also only by means of *that* feeling. A man devoid of *that* feeling cannot enter *that* world of knowledge. In the same way we can enter the altruistic world of knowledge only through the corresponding higher feelings. They are blessed who possess the latter feelings.

TEACHER —Indeed.

## KNOWLEDGE OF THE HIGHEST GOOD

A STUDENT.—Sir, if the knowlegde of what is good and what is evil in any particular department of Nature has to be gained by corresponding higher feelings, then, the higher man alone is competent to lay down what is good for us and what is evil for us.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. A man with higher sense of justice alone can tell us what is unjust or harmful in relations between men.

A STUDENT.—Will you tell us what is unjust in relations between men ?

TEACHER.—It is unjust to rob a man of his birth-rights, to rob him of his due privileges, his right to respect, liberty etc. You know that man has evolved from the animal world. In the animal world, we find that millions of animals of various species have in the past perpetuated various acts of grave injustice or atrocity on one another. They continue to do so even now. In the human world, similar has been the drama played not only against animals but even against men just in order to satisfy one or another pleasure-giving desire. Even now such a kind of cruelty or injustice is prevalent to a very large extent.

A STUDENT.—Is it pleasure-giving desires, Sir, which impel a man to trespass upon the individuality or proper rights and privileges of other men and animals ?

TEACHER.—Indeed so. The law of crimes which has been codified is intended to curb this atrocious spirit of man. The refinements introduced in the region of punishments are due to the higher men who possess one or another feeling of justice. The cruel conventions or customs by which dire injustice was done to men and animals have been abolished as a consequence of the agitation launched by men possessed of one

or another sense of justice. The voice raised against cruelty to animals is also the voice of just men.

A STUDENT.—Is it unjust, Sir, to kill animals for food ?

TEACHER.—In one of my talks, I have already dealt with this subject. It is rank injustice to kill an animal for food, sacrifice, trade etc. Millions of animals are slaughtered almost everyday by all those persons who are devoid of justice-based senses in relation to them. So long as they (animals) do not make a murderous assault on somebody, we have no right to kill them for any purpose of ours. Still the meat-eaters fail to acknowledge such a *true birth right* of the animal kingdom and do not respect such a right because of their lower selfish nature.

A STUDENT.—How essential it is, then, to develop higher feelings or senses !

TEACHER.—The highest work in which some man or society can be more usefully engaged is the work of evolving higher feelings. *For then alone could end injustice, oppression, cruelty trespasses etc.* The death of evil lies in the freedom from low feelings. The evolution of good lies in the evolution of higher forces.

A STUDENT.—What, according to you, then, Sir, is meant by progress or higher civilization of mankind ?

TEACHER.—The true civilization consists in replacing false beliefs by true knowledge and replacing evil forces of heart by higher or evolutionary forces. That nation would be more civilized than another whose greater number is enlightened by Nature-based true knowledge and ennobled by higher or altruistic feelings. The various feelings of justice and unselfish service raise moral or higher standard of the life of individuals and nations.

A STUDENT.—Why is it that we do not see any agitation in our families, societies or races for the growth of higher feelings ?

TEACHER.—This is so because there is an epidemic of low-loves and low-hates in the hearts of men and there is a famine of feelings of justice and higher service.

A STUDENT.—Then, Sir, in order to end all strife, disharmony, cruelty, injustice etc., in homes, societies, races etc, this epidemic has to be eradicated.

TEACHER.—Indeed so.

A STUDENT.—How can this epidemic of low-loves and low-hates be removed ?

TEACHER.—This can be done only by conveying to fit souls, *that unique light* which can enter their hearts, open before them that subtle world called soul-life, show them the horror of the low-loves and low-hates and the most attractive beauty of higher or altruistic feelings; and on the other *that unique power* which can liberate them from low feeling and evolve in them higher or altruistic forces.

A STUDENT.—Can sense of justice give us these blessings ?

TEACHER.—Sense of justice can merely show us the ugly form of injustice and not the ugly form of various other low-loves and low-hates.

A STUDENT.—Can higher reverence give us that light and that power ?

TEACHER.—No.

A STUDENT.—Can gratitude give us that unique light and unique power ?

TEACHER.—No.

A STUDENT.—Can mercy or other altruistic forces yield that unique light and unique power ?

TEACHER.—No. These or similar various other *altruistic forces can reveal their own nature and the world of their own gratification*. They cannot show the nature of soul-life or laws of its evolution. They cannot show the nature of soul-beauty. They cannot show us the laws of freedom from soul-degradation. They cannot show us the laws of soul-evolution. *The only forces which can generate that unique light and unique power are highest psychic or divine forces called 'Dev Shakties'*

A STUDENT.—In whom have Dev Shakties evolved ?

TEACHER.—They have evolved in Devatma.

A STUDENT.—How essential, then, it is, Sir, to get the blessings of these gift of unique light and unique power !

TEACHER.—It is bounden duty of every fit soul of every race and nation to get these gifts as thereby alone we would get out of the world of injustice, wrong and evil and live in the world of higher life.

A STUDENT.—You have tried to show us the grand beauty and necessity of true knowledge and higher or altruistic

feelings. But why is it that men do not long for true knowledge and higher life ?

TEACHER.—I have repeatedly tried to impress upon you the fact that those who are devoid of higher feelings are shut out of the higher world. Since they are shut out naturally they can have no desire for that world. When they possess no desire, they can never develop a longing. Now, when a man is selfish and is devoid of a powerful altruistic feeling for helping others in pain, misery or need, he will not be motivated to do some act of public good out of disinterested feelings, nor will he think thoughts and feel urges which arise in a man possessed of those higher feelings. But if he has got in heredity a fit heart, he can by means of the unique light, see the horror of selfish life and the beauty of disinterested feelings and feel an urge to get free from the former and develop the latter. By means of unique power he will be able to get that freedom and evolve those higher feelings. Hence for all pleasure-dominated human souls, this unique light and this unique power are *most essentially* needed. It is only then, that desire for freedom can grow. It is then, that a longing for a higher feeling can grow. It is only then, that attraction for true knowledge can grow. It is only then, that repulsion for falsehoods of all kinds can grow. It is only then, that man's highest privilege as man would be realized ?

A STUDENT.—Can you give us illustrations to carry home to us the truth of the above statement ?

TEACHER.—In our society you can find such instances in plenty. There used to be a young student who was addicted to some evils and who literally weltered in the mire of evil society. His daily life betokened no sign of higher life or higher ambitions. To his great good fortune, he came under the influence of a great soul in the Dev Samaj who had renounced a job full of high prospects and taken to the life of renunciation and service. It was most surprising to me how this youth took a turn for the better ! He gave up instantly the vices he was a victim to. He gave up his ambitions for worldly prospects. As soon as he completed education he came to dedicate his life for the cause of our society. Thirty-two years have rolled over that event and he has stuck to his guns and made his life useful and serviceable in various ways.

All his lower ideals have vanished. The higher ideal of higher service alone beckoned him to the life of service and kept him loyal to it.

This is an instance of a soul who possessed no strong higher feeling by birth but who had a good heart and who could be reclaimed and ennobled only by the agency of the unique light and unique power.

Another young man, whom his revered father kept in Dev Ashram during his college career, so wonderfully changed that in a way he kicked a throne to embrace the life of service. He was connected with some royal families. He could have, if he had chosen, risen to one of the higher positions in a native state. He could have married and brought up a happy family. But all worldly prospects paled before him and they must fade away in the eyes of those who wake up from the stupor of low life and bask in the wonder-world of higher life. He graduated and became a whole-time worker of the Dev Samaj. Full thirty-four years have rolled over and he has grown higher from one stage to another.

There is a life-story of another graduate who once held hostile attitude towards our society. But as soon as he received this unique light and continued to assimilate the unique power he adopted the mission of sacrifice and service as be-all and end all of his stay on this earth. He is a young man now fully enrolled as a life-worker.

Just step into the garden laid down by our most worshipful *Guru*, and you will come across many a fragrant flower of noble and unselfish life.

A STUDENT.—Can't a person possessed of some altruistic force emit this unique light and this unique power ?

TEACHER.—No, that is impossible. Mercy shows the horrors of cruelty and not horrors of adultery, dishonesty, gambling, theft etc. A man may be merciful and yet he may be a bribes-taker and sexually impure. He may be devoid of reverence, gratitude, etc. Even higher feelings devoid of this unique divine light lead to evil.

A STUDENT.—How can an altruistic feeling lead to evil ?

TEACHER.—Ordinarily, it does not. But it does not show what is right and wrong in all our relations. A merciful saint is reported to have screened a thief by letting him sleep with



his daughter because the thief appealed to his mercy to save him. When the police arrived and enquired about the absconding thief, the saint is said to have declared that the thief was not present in his house and the man who lay with his daughter was his son-in-law.

It is said of a woman that she sold her body to a persistent lover as she had to relieve the needs of some starving family.

A man himself told me that he took bribes not for himself but for the poor. He robbed Peter to feed Paul.

Such examples can be multiplied.

A STUDENT.—What does, then, the unique divine light show ?

TEACHER.—It reveals to the recipient the truths or facts about the nature and organism of human soul, its diseases, its degeneration, its freedom from degeneration and dissolution and its evolution in higher or altruistic feelings.

A STUDENT.—How does the unique power benefit us ?

TEACHER.—It provides us with strength to free ourselves from soul-darkness and evil life and to develop true soul-knowledge and true higher soul-life.

## SPIRITUAL LIFE IS LAW-BOUND

A STUDENT.—What are the other conditions for becoming good ?

TEACHER.—We must realize that moral life is law bound. We get moral or immoral by our behaviour in relation to ourselves and to others. Our behaviour is subject to laws which are universal and eternal.

This is a universal fact that every human soul possesses two mighty instincts—the instinct to live and the instinct to live happy. Led by these instincts he develops certain consciousnesses of pleasure and pain. When led by pleasure, man is drawn towards the objects of his gratifications and repeats such practices, he gets attached to them and detached from painful experiences. These lead him to develop low-loves and low-hates.

A STUDENT.—Kindly illustrate this.

TEACHER.—A child is drawn towards delicious sweets. He repeats his experience. He gradually grows fond of delicious things. This fondness grows so mighty and strong in him that he often stakes all to have it. I know a number of cases where slaves to low palate preferred death to abstaining from the things of their taste. Recently a most precious life was lost because of slavery to palate. In the same way, habit of drinking is formed. I know of many cases of responsible rich or highly placed persons who have chosen to give up their ghost rather than abstain from drinking. Recently, a young bright and most promising youngman addicted to drinking, had to bid adieu to his high job because he neglected his duties of office. He neglected his duties to his family, too. He sacrificed his respect in the society and preferred to lead a disgraceful life rather than give up drinking.

A STUDENT.—In these cases, the men did nothing immoral.

TEACHER.—In the higher sense they did. Man owes duties to his own self, to his wife, children and other dependents. If in the pursuit of evil habits, he violates them, he breaks a moral law.

But let me give you instances of accepted immoral life.

There was a man enjoying one of the highest jobs open to an Indian. He developed love of money. This led him to accept bribes and grow dishonest. Was he or was he not immoral ?

A STUDENT.—Yes, Sir, he was immoral.

TEACHER.—He generated this immoral life in his soul by his behaviour. His love of pleasure arising out of money, made him sacrifice interests of his masters and those whose destinies he was ruling. The case of such a behaviour of his was love of money or love of pleasure arising out of amassing money.

A STUDENT.—I can understand, Sir, that our behaviour makes us immoral. One of the causes of such a behaviour is love of money. Are there other causes too ?

TEACHER.—Yes, there are good many causes. But they are all rooted in our love of pleasure and hatred of pain. Sex instinct is another powerful instinct. Its gratification gives pleasure. The pursuit of pleasure and its repeated satisfaction develops into low-love of pleasure arising out of sex-gratification. In my youth, I witnessed a case which I can never forget. A *tehsildar* died. He had amassed a huge pile. He died leaving all his property to his wife and child. His son was a very handsome one. This young man being the only son took over its charge. He got into meshes of a prostitute. His sex-infatuation made him an absolute slave of the prostitute. His mother moved the machinery of law to save some property from the sure wreckage. The son had to take his share and part. He lost that also at the altar of the prostitute. When he had lost everything, he was kicked out. He lost his balance of mind. He died a premature death—death of a wrecked man. Besides suffering himself, he neglected his wife and lived the life of open sin and debauchery. Was he an immoral man or not ?

A STUDENT.—He was. I can also see that his behaviour

led by sex-infatuation polluted his life and injured the lives of others. This sex-infatuation is common among youth. I read that in a European or American University every twenty five per cent of the collegians had venereal diseases. In a report of a big continent, it was said that after every ten men there was one venereally diseased citizen. A white Judge wrote that ninety per cent girls in his country from thirteen onwards had sex-thrills and experiences before marriage and he was not able to believe that five per cent unmarried girls were physically virgins. The infatuation is behind the century old custom of *purdah*. This is behind segregating girls' institutions from those of boys. This infatuation has caused mistrust in our relations.

TEACHER.—I am glad that you are able to see that sex-infatuation produces immorality. In the same way, love of pleasures arising out of fame, name power, position, family, children, bias for caste, race, colour etc., produce a lot of immorality, because they lead us to transgression.

A STUDENT.—In the light of this talk, will you kindly enunciate a moral law, the violation of which leads to immorality.

TEACHER.—As man is a part of humanity, he owes certain duties and responsibilities to this great kingdom of Nature. As a part, he has not only to respect this kingdom but contribute to its welfare. The moral law that governs life is this that being a part of Nature, he ought to respect the rights, life, honour, etc., of a human being and refrain from every kind of transgression in relation to brother man. Moral life means life of such restraints on the pleasure-loving feelings which keep a man from trespassing on the life and rights of others. Again, it consists in developing altruism which leads us to serve all kingdoms of Nature. But when led by love of pleasure, man sacrifices the life, happiness, honour and rights of others, *for his own pleasure* he becomes immoral. Both morality and immorality have their origin in life and behaviour of man. Let us remove the causes of immorality and it would end. The cause being in the motives of [man, we have to change the heart of man. This noble change is called a true conversion. Mere belief divorced from moral life never means and never can mean conversion. Any such conversion does not bring about any

change in the moral life of man.

A STUDENT.—You mean, then, Sir, that conversion means change for the better in the life of man.

TEACHER.—A man is ruined as much by false beliefs as by his low behaviour. He has, therefore, to be changed from a desire for consoling but false beliefs and false ideals to a desire for pure and unadulterated truth and turn from a low behaviour to noble behaviour. He is, then, said to be morally and spiritually converted who is liberated from the cobweb of fictions and lower feelings and who evolves desire for truth and hatred for trespasses on the rights of others. Such a man is said to be truly converted.

A STUDENT.—If knowledge of truth is confined to facts and laws of Nature, they can rule the body of man quite well, they can also rule the moral world. But how can Nature's facts and laws rule spiritual life ?

TEACHER.—If by spiritual life we mean the life of full-fledged altruism and love of the ideal, we have to find the universal laws about them in Nature, too. Just please try to think if life without altruism can ever be called spiritual.

In our terms, life barren of altruistic forces can never be called spiritual. A soul who seeks his own salvation, ignoring the salvation of others, would not be a welcome figure to us. Even Mahatma Buddha felt no joy in mere personal salvation. He became Buddha, according to his followers, before he moved a little finger for others. But that gave him no satisfaction. He passed more than forty years in the service of others. You will agree, that life barren of altruism is a desert without a blade of green grass,

A STUDENT.—Spiritual life consists in worship of an Ideal also. Are Ideals also found in Nature ?

TEACHER.—All living and ruling ideals of mankind are Buddha, Krishna, Mohammed, Christ, Mahavira and others. The ideal of character worthy of devotion and worship would be a Devatma—i.e., a unique manifestation of *Dev Shakties* (i.e., complete and all-sided love of Truth and Goodness, and complete and all-sided repulsion for Untruth and Wrong). The higher the ideal, greater would be man's adoration and deeper his *bhakti*. His worship would develop altruism. Hence the law of spirituality demands of a seeker, his adoration for Devatma

and his blossoming into altruistic soul.

A STUDENT.—How does the knowledge that spiritual life is law-bound help us to be good ?

TEACHER.—Such a knowledge would fill us with new life and faith. By fulfilling the laws of moral and spiritual life, we shall feel confident that we can be better and evolve our lives. There will be no need of cringing, weeping, supplicating with a sense of utter helplessness. "Fulfil the law and you live". becomes a slogan of the awakened men.

A STUDENT.—Yes, when once we cognise a law and are able to fulfil it, we feel strong and full of faith. capacity to achieve fills a man with self-confidence. But what is law of life ?

TEACHER.—Development of higher or altruistic forces is essential for the promotion of good and spiritual life. Freedom from low-loves and low-hates is essential for our liberation from the grip of death-dealing forces. These two wheels—Development and Freedom—make the chariot of life run courageously, confidently and zealously towards the fulfilment of its ideals.

The knowledge is bound to inspire awakened souls with a new gospel, new hope, new faith and new life.

A STUDENT.—You talk, Sir, as if you have personal experience of it.

TEACHER.—Yes, I have personal experience of this blessed life. I also personally know how this blessedness has been gained by several others. We, therefore, feel surprised when people ask us that when we do not believe in any traditional faith, why do we endeavour after higher life.

It is the knowledge of the law given to us and the power infused in us by our glorious Master, to live that law, that have made it obligatory on us to get free from low-loves and low-hates and evolve higher or altruistic forces. *To us higher life constitutes the breath of our nostrils. Higher service of others appears as the most sublime occupation.* Spending a part or whole of our life and time in the propagation of such wonderful knowledge and life seems to entrance the awakened souls. *We find salvation in the salvation of others. We find higher evolution in higher service of others.* Our knowledge and our experience blend beautifully to guide our life and activities and steer to safe anchor the ship of our soul.

## RIGHT AND WRONG

A STUDENT.—Sir, we find a great confusion prevailing over what is right and what is wrong. Muslims consider flesh-taking to be a right thing while Jains consider it to be wrong. Hindus and Muslims consider polygamy under certain conditions to be right while Christianity pronounces polygamy to be illegal and wrong. The monotheists consider idol-worship to be wrong while millions of Sanatanists consider it to be right and proper. A religious sect sanctions *Niyog* (i.e., sexual act with a person not connected by marriage-tie with the object of procreation) as right while other sects of this same religion consider it to be a form of adultery. The Muslims, Protestants Christians and others consider divorce to be justifiable under certain conditions while Hindus as a whole consider it to be wrong. *Purdah* is believed by orthodox Muslims to be right and proper, but non-orthodox Muslims and others consider it to be wrong. Some advocate *Jihad* (a religious war) to be right while millions of others consider it to be wrong. Murder of a heretic is believed by some to be right while millions of others consider it to be a crime deserving capital punishment. Violence is believed by millions to be permissible and right under certain conditions while non-violence is believed by majority of Hindus as the only right course. They say *Ahimsa* is the highest religion. Such examples can be multiplied. Is there no criterion to judge what is right and what is wrong?

TEACHER—I am glad you have asked this question. In order to know what is right and what is wrong, two conditions are necessary. The first condition is that one should possess necessary senses and consciousnesses which alone can reveal what is right. The second condition is that every such fact has to be verified in Nature and by the application of critical appreciation of Nature's facts and Nature's laws.

A STUDENT.—This is too vague for us. Sir, kindly illustrate this.

TEACHER.—Let me take the first condition, i.e., need of necessary senses or consciousnesses. Is it possible for you to hear me without the sense of hearing?

A STUDENT.—No, Sir.

TEACHER.—Now suppose we have to determine whether the call given to us by a familiar friend from outside the college, is his or somebody else's, how is it possible for us to arrive at a conclusion if we do not possess the sense of hearing? Hence, in order to come to a definite conclusion that *A* is calling us, we should possess the sense to hear the call. In the same way, suppose I want to ask you as to what is in my hand. You will all say that the object in my hand is a book. How do you know that? This is because you possess the sense of sight. Suppose I go to the home for the blind and ask the same question. Can they give a correct reply? Naturally, not. This is because the first condition is not fulfilled. They possess no sense of sight.

A STUDENT.—Kindly illustrate this with concrete examples.

TEACHER.—Once a tragedy took place in a town. A man was knocked down by a car and he died in the hospital. The facts revealed in the court were these: The car was running within the speed limit. It had to go round a corner before entering another big street. It blew the horn loud and from quite a distance. It was running on its side. And yet inspite of flash light and loud blowing of the horn, a man rushed into it, was knocked down and thus lost his life. Some neighbours of that place then informed the police that the deceased was both blind and deaf.

I heard of another incident. There was a big pool of rain water. A traveller was heading towards the pool. Persons coming after him saw the situation. They gave the man a loud call to stop. But inspite of their loudest possible cries the man went on unruffled, till he fell into the pool and thus ran the risk of being drowned. Those coming behind him ran and rescued him. They were sorry to see that the man was both blind and deaf.

How could these persons distinguish between what is risky



and what is safe ? If you rule out senses and consciousnesses in such cases, you rule out all talk of determining what is and what is not risky.

A STUDENT.—This is quite right, Sir, in the physical world.

TEACHER.—The same law rules mental, moral and spiritual worlds. You know that millions still believe that the earth is an out-stretched plane and that the Sun goes round the earth. Is it not so ?

A STUDENT.—It is true, Sir. There was a time when practically all mankind believed it to be true.

TEACHER.—Who exploded these and such other untruths.

A STUDENT.—The scientists who possessed love for true knowledge of the physical world and developed mental powers.

TEACHER.—These persons, in fact, possessed intellectual powers which may be called mental senses which helped them to see what is a fact and what is fiction. Sense organs are physical powers for consciousnesses. In the same way, evolved mental powers are mental senses. There was a time when entire mankind believed that all physical diseases were due to the wrath of some deities. Hence, instead of seeking a cure in Nature, men went to temples to propitiate deities. Even when some persons found out certain efficacious drugs, they did not prescribe them openly. They gave them under a disguise. Hence it was that when Digby found out that a wound could be healed up by being washed clean and then kept bound for some days, he did not declare that as a cure. He said that he possessed a powder. This powder if cast on the wound, cured the wound provided the wound was washed clean and then bandaged. Several persons mixed their medicines with inoffensive black ink and with that ink wrote on a paper a charm. They would ask the patient to go and wash the charm in water and drink it and thus the deity would cure him. The incredulous people accepted this hoax and thus became still more credulous. In my own time, villagers rose in revolt against a doctor and beat him hard because during cholera epidemic, he had to put potassium permanganate in wells to kill the germs. They said it was foolish of a doctor to spoil water given by the gods. One whole family died of this epidemic because they would not leave the infected area saying that disease was sent by gods and if

they were destined to die nothing could save them. Even today millions believe in the efficacy of charms, incantations, armlets, sacrifices, etc.

A STUDENT.—We know now, Sir, that the science of medicine and surgery has liberated millions from such beliefs.

TEACHER.—Those who liberated mankind from these beliefs were persons who possessed higher mental consciousnesses.

A STUDENT.—Is there any other sphere of life in which mankind has been saved by such mental consciousnesses ?

TEACHER.—Higher mental consciousnesses have saved mankind from various false beliefs regarding the origin of man and the laws that rule him.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly explain this.

TEACHER.—How man has appeared on this planet was a problem before mankind. In the absence of facts, various theories were advanced. Even today millions believe in those theories. None of these theories is being believed by biologists. Biologists are scientists. They have studied facts of Nature. Being endowed with higher mental consciousnesses, they could not be satisfied with fictions. They have come to a conclusion that man has come into being in the course of evolution of the mammalian stock of animals. They thus believe in the theory of evolution.

A STUDENT.—Sir, I also cannot believe that we have not been created by all-powerful God.

TEACHER.—Millions in the world share your belief. Biologists do not share it. They have advanced their own discovery. And in all schools and colleges it is this discovery that is being taught and as men grow in mental powers, they shall accept it as a matter of course. Do you think a man in the street will believe you if you tell him that the earth is round and that it goes round the Sun ?

A STUDENT.—Illiterate persons, Sir, are incapable of comprehending these truths.

TEACHER.—Even thousands of literate persons are incapable because they lack the requisite mental consciousness.

A STUDENT.—I can understand that senses and consciousnesses are necessary for knowing what is a fact in the physical and the mental worlds. Are senses or consciousnesses necessary in determining what is right and what is wrong ?

TEACHER.—Here also it is the higher consciousnesses which help us. You know slavery was once rampant in the world and slaves were bought and sold as chattels.

A STUDENT.—Was slavery bad ?

TEACHER.—How do you ask such a question in this age ? Slavery is now abolished in all the civilized countries.

A STUDENT.—Sir, because the civilized world has abolished it, that is no reason that it was bad. It was practised among Muslims and Christians. The Christian missionaries quoted scriptures in its defence. Some of the Muslims still believe that the system was not bad in Islam as slaves were treated with love.

TEACHER.—Would you accept foreign rule for all times and give up all yearning for Swaraj if you are treated with love by the foreigners ?

A STUDENT.—Good government is no substitute for self-government. Chains of gold are as bad as chains of iron. Chains are chains. They rob us of freedom.

TEACHER.—Exactly so. The slavery too robbed a slave of his freedom of life. No amount of love shown to slaves could justify robbing them of the right of self-determination and self-expression. A golden cage can hardly be appreciated by a bird in preference to free and broad spaces to fly at its own pleasure. Slavery at its best was a cage and thus stunted the growth of millions of human beings.

A STUDENT.—I agree. Subjection is a subjection and it cannot help us to grow to the full stature of our manhood. Slavery stands discredited. But how was this truth established in the world when practically the whole civilized world believed in slavery as right ?

TEACHER.—The believers lacked higher consciousnesses. They had *no higher senses to see* the human misery as envisaged in the world of slaves and *no sense to hear* the wails of slaves. So far as the higher world was concerned, they were deaf and blind. The thing was nearest to them and yet lay far off as the pool of water was nearest to the blind man and yet for him it was so far as if it was non-existent.

A STUDENT.—Kindly explain how without a higher sense man is blind even to the thing nearest to him.

TEACHER.—There is a recorded incident in the life of a

husband who got angry with his wife. He placed the two legs of his cot on her hands and slept over the cot. He slept the whole night without being touched by her pain and cries. The man had no higher sense to make him responsive to her misery.

There is another recorded instance of a son whose father was seriously ill. It was one of his duties to help his father at night time if he had to urinate or satisfy call of nature. The father felt the need. He called his son. He gave him a number of calls. The son was awake, but he would not get up. It was winter night and he lay cosy in his blankets. The father actually cried. But the son was unaffected as a blind man is unaffected by any ugly or pathetic scene in the objective world.

Both these persons were devoid of higher senses. They never felt ashamed because they were unable to see their wrong side. They felt their conduct to be right whereas it was reprehensible.

A STUDENT.—Both these instances are really most painful.

TEACHER.—Slavery was millions of times more reprehensible. Human beings were considered chattels, bereft of a human soul. Slaves were human beings. It required higher senses to know it. Their right to freedom was denied to them. It required a higher sense to show this usurpation. Their feelings were never regarded. It required a higher sense to see their rights and respect them. Men with higher senses established a new standard of right and wrong which was absent before. As the humanity advanced, it accepted that new and true standard of right and wrong, and penalised slavery for all times.

A STUDENT.—Have I to understand then, Sir, that what is right and what is wrong in our behaviour towards men and animals, is to be determined neither by bodily senses nor mental powers but mainly by higher senses of heart?

TEACHER.—Indeed so.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly give us any other instance ?

TEACHER.—There was a time when unmarried mothers used to throw illegitimate children in streets and these innocent children died a death which they did not deserve. Millions saw this tragedy with physical eyes. They understood the situation with

mental eyes. But they had no higher senses to view the horror of the tragedy. They had sympathy with unmarried mothers but not with illegitimate children. Dr. Bernardo came with this higher sense. He saw the horror and ugliness of the situation. He gave all his powers to save them. He brought in a new standard of right and wrong. The world began to see the rightness of his action. Today the sympathy of the world is with him. In Russia, all illegitimate children are legalised. Hence all inducement to kill them has vanished.

A STUDENT.—This is indeed a grand act.

TEACHER.—It is, and yet when Dr. Bernardo began this great work, he was made a butt of ridicule and persecution.

A STUDENT.—How painful !

The class dispersed for the day.

## MORAL COGNITION IN SOCIAL FIELD

When the class met again for the period, a student asked, "Sir, I am anxious to know more about this subject, with particular reference to our land."

TEACHER.—There was a time when it was considered right to burn widows on the funeral pyre of their dead husbands. The *Brahmins* quoted scriptures in defence of this most gruesome custom. Millions of Hindus, who imbibed such false belief from their childhood, saw nothing wrong in this act. They stood unruffled when innocent and tender girls and women were consigned alive to flames. For several centuries this evil custom prevailed. Countless women were burnt alive. But the time came when men with higher senses appeared in the course of the progress of man. They were able to see, in this custom, the gravest injustice done to women. Seeing the heart-rending scenes perpetrated before their eyes they were deeply stirred. They declared that the custom was satanic, wholly wrong, absolutely unjustifiable and inhuman. The declaration of this came like a stunning blow to those devoid of this higher sense. The orthodox people came out with pamphlets and oral and written protests against these apostles of new stand-point on right. The battle waged furiously. The so-called religious leaders quoted scriptures in their defence. But the voice of these higher people was heard by those having some good heart. Their number increased. The law was passed. *Sati* was penalized. The horrible crime was wiped off from this soil. Our mothers became safe. Today even a child holds that the old belief, by which widows were burnt alive, was false and the new perspective which has abolished *Sati*, is right. This is how a new awakening on right and wrong was firmly established on this point.

A STUDENT.—Sir, we are thankful to these higher people.

TEACHER.—Yes, they deserve our thanks. For ages, again, widow-remarriage was anathematized. When we realize that most of the poor child-wives became widows even before they consummated their marriage, the sight becomes sickening; and more so when we know that widows were tabooed in all festivities. Their heads were shaved. They wore the coarsest fabrics. They were treated as cursed beings. Their lot was horrible. And yet all this was allowed to exist as right and proper.

A STUDENT.—What a terrible injustice !

TEACHER.—Yes, it was the gravest possible injustice. But perhaps none could comprehend the atrocity of the custom because they possessed no higher sense and no higher repulsion. The truth that a widow is a human being having as much right to the joys of conjugal life as a widower, could not be seen. A Vidya Sagar rose. A Sir Ganga Ram rose. These sympathetic souls came with higher senses. They felt the intensity of the injustice which they were able to see by means of their higher senses. They made largest sacrifices. Vidya Sagar particularly had to suffer the most, at the hands of those wedded to the old and unjust custom. But these great men succeeded in establishing the right with regard to widow-remarriage even against the scriptural authority and the weight of religious heads and wealthy magnates. Today this is an established thing.

A STUDENT.—Sir, have you yourself seen some persons advocating such a grave injustice ?

TEACHER.—Yes, I have. It was in the year 1907, that a Provincial Social Conference was held in my province. A widow had to move a resolution in defence of widows' right to re-marry. I was the captain of the volunteers. I saw hundreds of persons including graduates and pleaders standing up and howling at the lady to sit down. They made the holding of the conference impossible. The conference was dissolved for the day. That was the occasion when I saw the monstrosity of that unjust custom. No satan conceived by man could have made a more effective display of his opposition to a holy thing. The comedy of the whole thing was that a year or two after, one of the zealous advocates of the injustice solicited my help to get him a widow in marriage as he had lost his wife. I have never forgotten the tragic sight in that conference. But

all those opponents were put to shame when in the next social conference that very widow who had been howled at, was called to preside and she was taken through the streets of a big town in a huge procession. The number of the advocates of the new point had swelled considerably.

A STUDENT.—Sir, one is amazed at the audacity of those who could defend such a grave injustice !

TEACHER.—It was the audacity of the blind and the insane persons. They never could see the injustice. But yet they, like a lunatic, believed that they were in the right. I saw a mental lunatic who believed his own loving mother as an enemy and he actually beat her because she brought him food. He said she had brought poison for him. Such is the irony of a moral lunatic too.

A STUDENT.—I agree with you, Sir, that such persons are not only morally blind but they are moral lunatics too.

TEACHER.—The Semitic scriptures sanction slaughter of animals for food etc. In one sect it is believed to be a pious act to murder animals as a sacrifice to propitiate the deity on a great pilgrimage occasion. Among Hindus too, there are certain sects who butcher animals sometimes most cruelly to propitiate gods and goddesses. A modern Hindu sect posing as a vanguard of Hindu religion has discovered in Vedas a sanction for animal slaughter for food etc. One man simply got wrath with me when I said, "We consider flesh-eating as a sin." And he burst out, "Do you dare to call that food as forbidden which God Almighty has sanctioned as proper ?" One Christian lady while perusing the list of the eight specified sins which every member of the Dev Samaj has to give up and permanently refrain from, said, "But how can slaughter of animals be a sin when Lord God has permitted us to kill them for food and sacrifice ?" From their own point of view, they asserted that they were in the right. But a conflict arose from the time great men came on the scene. Lord Buddha took his stand for the animals and denounced their slaughter as wrong. The founder of Jain cult was another great soul. In England and America, large associations have sprung up in defence of the animals. The animal life is being viewed as sacred. They assert that it is as much a crime to murder a useful and innocent animal as it is to murder a human being. In Europe and



America, hundreds of hotels have been started which provide strictly vegetarian food. They are out to challenge every point raised in defence of animal slaughter. Their higher sense has shown them the ingratitude, callousness and rank injustice in slaughtering our friends—the useful animals—for food, and cowardice involved in killing helpless, unarmed, defenceless birds and useful animals. They consider that age to be golden age which would see the end of the slaughter of animals for food, sport and trade, etc.

A STUDENT.—Sir, I find that there is still going on a fierce controversy on this point.

TEACHER.—To every age-long injustice against which a voice is raised, a violent resistance is offered by those wedded to it. Arguments take us nowhere. It is the higher sense of right which ultimately gathers force and triumphs.

A STUDENT.—Is there any other point on which a controversy has arisen ?

TEACHER.—On the question of polygamy the new ideas of monogamy have made a large stride. In Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Pasha penalized polygamy. Among Hindus there is a very serious attempt to penalize polygamy. At Lahore, in a huge conference of Muslim ladies a resolution was passed by them condemning polygamy and an appeal was made by them to their sisters not to have any marriage connections with polygamous families. The growing voice of educated women is aggressively crying down polygamy. It is a simple justice to woman that she should have a right to the undivided affection and love of her husband, who on his own part claims her all.

Again, for ages woman was kept ignorant and in *purdah*. The growing higher sense of great men saw the inhumanity of this unequal treatment. The doors for the education of women were opened wide. And even though the man devoid of this sense is still at war with the reformers, he is becoming a back number. Even the custom of putting on veil is being decried. It is sad that sometimes women themselves oppose the holy attempts of reformers. But the time is gone when the advocate of polygamy, of seclusion of woman, of debarring woman from receiving higher education etc. could have their own way. The people with a new awakening of right and wrong are gaining in numbers and strength and they who stand by these wrong and

unjust customs even in the name of religion shall meet with nothing but defeat. The voice of justice to women and giving them equal rights of progress, has been a clarion call and the children of man are rushing to stand by the standard raised.

A STUDENT.—Are we to believe then, Sir, that the standard of right and wrong is placed before man by great men possessed of higher senses ?

TEACHER.—I have given you various examples of how slavery is abolished; *Sati* is penalised; enforced widowhood is given a knock down at its head; child-marriage is barred by law; polygamy, seclusion of woman, and such other sins against women stand discredited; the slaughter and ill-treatment of dumb animals is disfavoured. In all these it is great men who have given us a new awakening of what is right and wrong. These great men were not more educated than their orthodox brethren. They were simply born with higher senses. Their higher senses prevailed against all arguments advanced on the basis of the matter being hoary or ancient, ancestral or national, scripturally sanctioned or sacred etc. Such shall be the state of things even in the future. It is great men who would lay down higher laws for us.

A STUDENT.—Whence do they get higher senses ?

TEACHER.—They get them in heredity and develop them in environments, much in the same way as we get physical senses and brains in heredity and develop them in environments. As we differ from one another in the number and sensitivity of physical senses, in the variety and vitality of mental powers according to our parentage and ancestry, so also men differ from one another in the variety and quality of feelings on the basis of different heredity. This is why men with new and higher senses appear to shed new light on various problems.

A STUDENT.—What a blessing it is, Sir, to have such souls in our land ?

TEACHER.—It is real blessing for the world to have more and more of these benefactors.

A STUDENT.—How do they come into existence ?

TEACHER.—By the higher process of evolution working in Nature, great souls appear. In law-bound Nature, we find two definite processes working ceaselessly day and night. By the working of one process lower, degrading or destructive exis-

tences come into being. By another process higher and constructive existences come into being. As we find in the animal world germs of several epidemics or pests, several poisonous serpents, man-destroying animals like wolves, tigers, lions etc., appearing in fulfilment of the dissolutionary process and goats, sheep, cows buffaloes, camels etc., appearing in fulfilment of the evolutionary process; so in the human world, the thieves, dacoits, robbers, forgers, debauchees, murderers, butchers, hunters, gangsters and hard-hearted, cruel and callous men, appear in the fulfilment of the dissolutionary process, and charitable, merciful, generous, reverent, unselfish persons etc., appear in fulfilment of the higher process called evolutionary process.

A STUDENT.—Do they appear as designed by somebody ?

TEACHER.—They appear in fulfilment of law. Law is neither intelligent nor unintelligent. It is an inevitable process. Once a law is set in motion its consequences follow as a matter of course. It is the inevitability of law and not the planned design which brings about the appearance of lower and higher souls. Whether the law is set in motion by a conscious or unconscious being, it produces the necessary result. If a man, who does not know swimming gets a slip and falls into deep waters and is not rescued, he is drowned. Water never cares nor can care that the man is a precious soul or a lower one. It works automatically. Lord Kitchner was the most precious soul for England in the first World War, but he found a watery grave. A great Vedantic Swami of India fell into waters and was drowned. India that knew him mourned his loss. But the law has no eyes or ears. It acts neither by flattery nor by appeals. It is inevitable. Hence individuals or families that have fulfilled the process of evolution grow higher and manifest the blessings mentioned above and individuals or families that have fulfilled the law of dissolution get degraded and produce progeny strongly aggressive in crimes, sins and acts of injustice and wrong.

A STUDENT.—It is a great blessing then, Sir, to be born of noble families or parents.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. This blessing is actualized by higher environments. Hence heredity and environments are the two greatest factors for determining the destiny of man.

## MORAL COGNITION IN PERSONAL RELATIONS

TEACHER.—I have tried to impress on you the fact that great men who possess higher senses are alone qualified to place before us the standard of what is right and what is wrong in our individual or collective life. When any custom or law is based on injustice and millions follow it without a question, it would sway human minds only till when a noble soul equipped with a *sense of justice in that relation*, rises and protests against it. In the light of his higher sense, he views it as horrible and declares it as such. This leads to a conflict. War ensues. But there is no doubt about the final victory. Millions wedded to unjust customs or laws are blind. They shriek because they are not able to comprehend the new voice. But gradually from amongst them rise the followers of the new voice. They gather round the new leader. The numbers swell. Reason accepts the new verdict. Custom changes. Old law is abolished. New custom and new law based on justice take their place. This is how slavery was abolished, *Sati* was penalised and several other wrongs were righted. Let me carry on this topic a little further.

A STUDENT.—Please do so before I put you some questions.

TEACHER.—You, please, reserve your questions for the subsequent lesson or lessons. Let me carry on the theme. There are millions and billions who still believe that the only duty that a man owes as an individual, is towards himself and his wife and children or at the most to nearest relatives. They consider that it is most just and proper that a father's property should descend exclusively to his children and wife or nearest blood relatives and to none else. The idea that children and nearest relatives are not the only persons who ought to profit by the earnings or accumulations of a person is a new one. That the

society, nation or humanity. too, has some right to the love and riches of a man, sounds a strange and unfamiliar note. That inheritance is a theft, is considered a heresy.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, is it not right for the father to leave all his earnings to his children as they are the direct result of his personal efforts.

TEACHER.—It is just and proper that parents should educate children according to their means and qualify them for being able to stand on their own legs. But once the children have grown adults and are able to earn, responsibility ceases. Then others—race, nation, humanity etc.—have a higher claim on their wealth and services. This view is placed before humanity by great souls who have by their practical life proved the beauty of such a standpoint.

A STUDENT.—Who are they, Sir? Can you cite some?

TEACHER.—Carnegie earned millions. He left the largest bulk of his earnings for several institutions and objects of general utility for all men. He recognized the truth that children are not the only claimants or even main claimants of parents' wealth and attention. There is another American who has opened an office having twenty clerks with the main object of distributing all his wealth for good institutions of public welfare. The late Sir Ganga Ram gave away nearly fifty lacs for charitable purposes, thus illustrating the truth that children are not the only claimants on parents' wealth. The most venerable Founder of our Society left all he possessed for the highest welfare of mankind and left nothing for his children as all of them were adults and able enough to earn.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly show us why others also have a claim on our parents' wealth?

TEACHER.—Would you agree with me that our benefactors, too, have some claim on our attention, service and possessions?

A STUDENT.—They have. But who are our benefactors?

TEACHER.—Are not our parents our benefactors?

A STUDENT.—They are and they have claim on us.

TEACHER.—Has our race any claim on us?

A STUDENT.—Decidedly it has. But for it, we would have been no where. All good traditions, good customs and all culture that we have inherited is due to it.

TEACHER.—Has our nation any claims on us?

A STUDENT.—Decidedly it has. Where shall we be if we did not belong to our nation. Our individual good to a large measure depends on the welfare of our nation. In our day we owe a great deal to the patriots like Gokhale, Tilak, C. R. Dass, Gandhi, Malaviya, Tagore and others, who lived and died for the nation. Today, our hero worship is mainly confined to them. Our culture, our honour, our well-being, our progress etc., are very closely bound up with our nation's strength. We must live and die for our nation.

TEACHER.—That is indeed the voice of the youth of our land. But do you count humanity among your benefactors ?

A STUDENT.—Indeed, we do. No nation can exist now without international relations. As we progress, these relations will be brought on firmer ground. Again, all nations are so inter-connected that it is impossible for us to be isolated. Again, the stock of new ideas, new discoveries, new inventions, new productions, new accomplishments, new achievements in the domain of art, poetry, literature, philosophy, science and technology has become the common heritage of all children of man. At no time were we so intimately linked to humanity as now.

TEACHER.—Do you owe anything to the animal world ?

A STUDENT.—We owe them a lot. The bullock has been the mainstay of our agriculture and cow and other milk-giving animals like goat, sheep, buffalo etc., have been supplying us with oceans of milk and other amenities of life. Horse, elephant, camel, and ass have been the ships for us to carry our loads and our person on their backs. The beautiful and singing birds have afforded us great joy.

TEACHER.—Do we owe anything to the plant world and the mineral world ?

A STUDENT.—Yes, Sir, But for them we would cease to exist.

TEACHER.—All these benefactors of ours do us no less good than our children. Children ordinarily receive far greater service than they do. In many cases they return services of parents by ingratitude. Decidedly they do less service to parents than these kingdoms. We can live without children but we cannot live without our race, nation, humanity, animal world, plant world and mineral world.

And, yet we consider our children the only object of our

love and service. We like to leave every thing for them. If all parents were to leave everything for their own children, public institutions and movements of general welfare would end. There would be no charitable schools, no charitable colleges, no charitable hospitals, no public sanatoria, no homes for the aged, no asylums for the unwanted, no *ashrams* for widows or unfortunate women, no orphanages, no *dharmshalas*, no public wells or tanks, etc. It is good that there are persons who have left large funds for the welfare of others. To these true servants of mankind, we owe all the good that we find. They have given us a new standard of what is right and what is wrong. They adjudge selfish life or life confined to children alone as low-life and selfless life as noble. When a selfish man dies even a cock does not crow. But if an unselfish person dies there is general mourning. Why ? Because an unselfish person is by general consent believed and accepted as a precious being. He is contributor to the well-being of others. Hence people feel grateful to him and cherish his name with love. This is why a new standard has been established—the standard that it is right to live for others and wrong to live only for one self or for one's family. Let me explain it. Suppose a man who has lived only or primarily for himself, dies, would you admire him ?

A STUDENT.—Kindly give a concrete example.

TEACHER.—I repeat an illustration. There was a man who was wealthy. But during his life-time, his miserliness led him even to deny ordinary amenities to his wife and children. He died. His wife went to several banks to get the money deposited by her husband. All the bankers told her that her husband had withdrawn deposits only a few days before he died. "What did he do with the amount ?" the wife asked. All of a sudden a light flashed on her. Her husband had requested that she should bury him with the coat he wore. She suspected that the money must be in that coat. She went to a Magistrate and told him everything. The body of the dead husband was exhumed. The coat was taken off. All money amounting to several hundreds of guineas was found there. What do you think of him ?

A STUDENT.—He was mean, too mean for words.

TEACHER.—There was a gazetted officer whose daughters

were studying in a recognised but charitable school. The organizers approached him with a prayer to contribute some donation to their institution. He said, "I do not believe in being charitable. I have no paisa for others. All that I have, is for me and my children. Please never expect a paisa in charity for any cause howsoever good and admirable." What do you think of him ?

A STUDENT.—Such an officer should be gazetted in the list of the lost souls ! His attitude was abominable.

TEACHER.—There was a multi-millionaire. He had only one son. I was one of the persons present when he was approached for a very laudable object. He said, "When any person approaches me for *Dan* (charity), I feel he is sucking out my *Jan* (life)."

A STUDENT.—How shameful !

TEACHER.—There was another multi-millionaire. He had no male issue. And yet he could not give anything in charity. While he was expiring, his wife announced a donation of three lacs. How he heard that when he was obviously lying unconscious and whence he got the strength to get up and deny it, is strange. But this is true that he jerked up and said, "No charity, no charity." So saying, he died. What do you think of him ?

A STUDENT.—It is indeed a pitiable case !

TEACHER.—Now let me tell you about another example. Late Sir Dorab Tata of the great Tata House died. He left three crores and all for the welfare of mankind. Another Parsi gentleman, Mr. N.M. Wadia left about a crore for the same purpose. From the interests of their moneys, thousands have benefited. What do you think of them ?

A STUDENT.—They are glorious heroes.

TEACHER.—You can see why I sometimes go to the extreme of saying that inheritance is theft. It may not be theft in the ordinary sense, but it is never-the-less mostly unjust. Children are not the only claimants. Others have also a claim on us. You admire only those who go beyond family circle and open hospitals for others, establish schools and colleges, found orphanages, create trusts for human welfare etc. You weep for those who have lived for their nation or others. It is impossible to admire those who live and die for their self or family because they have done nothing for others and hence



they have no claim on their gratitude or attention.

Time is coming when law would be passed by which the right of hoarding up money or building property would be considerably limited and it shall be the concern of the state and not parents to provide avenues for the physical well-being and mental growth of every child. It has become now an established principle that it is wrong to live for one's self or family exclusively. The only right course is to do something for others outside one's self or family. This standard is provided by altruistic souls and not by selfish souls.

A STUDENT.—If this principle had become the living rule of life of all of us, the condition of humanity would have been far happier.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. It is highly painful that a few individuals simply roll in wealth while millions starve. Again, how painful it is that over-production of food-stuffs should be burnt to ashes to increase the demand, while millions go without a meal. Selfishness is a high crime. One day it would be considered by every child as a high treason in relation to mankind. The selfish man is he who either lives for himself or for his family and closest ties alone. A selfish man is ready to avail himself of the good things provided by his society or nation but he wants to do nothing for them. The new standard of right and wrong says that he truly lives who lives for others and he truly decays and dies who lives for himself.

A STUDENT.—What a good standard is that ! How grateful should we feel to those who lived this and taught this !

Can you, Sir, give us any more instances how great souls place before us higher standards of conduct in personal conduct ?

TEACHER.—Lately a man was convicted and fined because he passed by when a woman was being molested by some ruffians and he did not run to her rescue. In his defence he said that he felt afraid that there might be more accomplices of the molesters in hiding. The Judge put him to shame. General Roberts is believed to have punished a soldier who saw a man getting drowned and did not plunge into water to rescue him. A medical officer in our Presidency was degraded or perhaps dismissed because he did not shake off his sleep to go to the help of a dying patient in the hospital when he was phoned

at 2 a.m. A Harley Street medical practitioner who was busy in research work of great importance was tried and found guilty by the Medical Board and disqualified for life because he established illicit relations with a woman who was his patient. A medical man is expected to show trustworthy and honourable conduct towards his patients. Parnell lost his hold on the hearts of his countrymen and was deserted, as he was found guilty of having had illicit relations with the wife of one of his followers who had given him the shelter of his home—which home he smashed by his fall. The higher voice of the people have laid down a beautiful standard that one guilty of such a base conduct is not fit to be called a man or a leader of men. All such standards of conduct in our personal relations, about decency, good manners, noble behaviour and higher life are placed before us by great men and great men alone.

## HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESSES AND SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY

TEACHER.—There was a time when practically the whole humanity believed in every thing contained in the scriptures and considered it wrong to doubt anything embodied in them. Even today, millions are of this opinion. But there are millions today who have been changed. They have come to believe that for the highest good of man it is right to accept only verified true knowledge even though it may go against any age-long belief or ancestral belief, or scriptural belief. They have come to believe that it is wrong to suppress true knowledge for fear of being called heretics. They have come to believe that they alone are true martyrs who stand by true knowledge even at the cost of life. They have come to believe that they are truly courageous who champion unpopular truths. All this change in belief and view-point is due to great souls who laid before man a new standard.

A STUDENT.—Who are those noble souls who have laid that new standard of right ?

TEACHER.—They are called scientists.

A STUDENT.—Who is a scientist ?

TEACHER.—He is a scientist who is inspired by the spirit or feeling of disinterested rational and critical pursuit of truth or true knowledge in any department of Nature.

A STUDENT.—Sir, can you illustrate this point by some real examples of life ?

TEACHER.—Galileo was inspired by such a feeling. He taught that the earth is round and not stationary. His pursuit of true knowledge was quite disinterested. It was very critical. It was rational. It was empirical. As it was opposed to scriptural and popular belief, Galileo was put in prison for teaching this truth. He ultimately stood by it. He taught the great principle

that it is wrong to accept a belief because it is age-long or because it is popular or because it commands veneration and that the only right thing is to accept *verified truth* at any cost. He had to pay a heavy price for championing this principle. He paid it. The churchmen condemned him to prison. The popular vote went to the church. But Galileo laid down a new conception of what is right faith for man and his conception prevailed. Today the whole civilized world has accepted his discovered truth.

Again, Bruno who taught the multiplicity of worlds was burnt alive by the churchmen. His statue stands at the place he was burnt at. His disinterested service of truth cost him his life. But he came out victorious. Love for true knowledge is considered the only right course and blind belief is considered a wrong course of life. Kepler, Latimer, Darwin and others have manifested the same spirit. They are respected. All these scientists have educated mankind so much that blind faith stands discredited as a dangerous thing for human evolution. It is right to pursue true knowledge at any price. It is considered wrong to give up this spirit and accept blind faith. This new conception of right and wrong in the domain of knowledge, is the heritage given to man by scientists.

A STUDENT.—It is a splendid heritage. How can man grow by blind faith ? A rational mind should always be ready to ask questions and also remain open for the light of true knowledge.

TEACHER.—True. The scientists also have established another higher standard of what is right and what is wrong. They have established the truth of freedom of opinion and thought. They have shown that it is wrong to force ideas or beliefs on others. They have also shown that it is the birth-right of man to think independently.

A STUDENT.—All those who have brought us this rich heritage have to be thanked. As physical slavery is an outrage on man, in the same way mental slavery is an outrage on rational minds.

TEACHER.—That is true. A society or nation is to be judged as civilized only to the extent that it provides atmosphere for liberty of thought and opinion. In the political world democracy is believed to be the best form of government because it provides room and scope for independence of thought and its free expression.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, why is it that it is considered wrong to think independently in matters of soul ?

TEACHER.—For centuries it was considered a heresy to doubt the beliefs about prevalent religious matters. He who doubted was called a heretic. Machines of tortures were invented to break the nerve of these so-called heretics. Mere difference of opinion led to burning of persons alive. Latimer and Redley were burnt alive merely for difference of beliefs. Queen Mary burnt or executed three hundred so-called heretics. Spanish inquisition mutilated thousands and killed them. Wars have been waged on the issue of difference of religious opinion leading to death of millions. Those who stood for the freedom of thought in matters of soul laid down a new standard of right and wrong, i.e., it is wrong to persecute a man for difference of beliefs; it is right to allow others the freedom of opinion and expression of his personal views and beliefs. This standard has been accepted as the guiding principle of life among certain democratic races or nations. But even in this age millions consider it right to persecute and even kill a man for his new beliefs and opinions and wrong to let him enjoy the same right to his views as they themselves enjoy. But great men have given us a new standard which must ultimately rule all affairs and races of men. Great men had to pay heavy prices. They are in fact the true martyrs. They won in the end. Humanity is grateful to them. Even now those opposed to this standard are either fanatics or ignorant and superstitious persons. The enlightened opinion has hailed this new standard as a great saving factor.

A STUDENT.—They who saw this new truth and sacrificed their all to uphold it, are the true benefactors of mankind. It is absolutely wrong to persecute others for difference in beliefs. It is absolutely right to give others the same right to hold their beliefs and to express them.

TEACHER.—There was a Reverend Christian who went to the extent of saying that even if all the wickednesses, all the sins and all the evils were to be rolled into one, they would weigh light before the sin of unbelief.

A STUDENT.—Was he a lunatic ?

TEACHER.—Morally he was. But men of his cult echoed it. Millions would endorse it even now. They are not able to put into practice their narrowness of vision and moral lunacy

because they have no power. Law has progressed and it penalises crimes committed in pursuance of this luncay. Law hangs those who murder another in the interests of their so-called religion. But the new standard would gradually bring out mankind from the stage of this narrowness in to a world of broad-mindedness and liberal ideas.

A STUDENT.—What would have happened, Sir, if these new standards had been nipped in the bud ?

TEACHER.—If such an eventuality had happened, humanity would have suffered irrevocably. Mankind would not have progressed to the present enlightened state. It would have continued in the dungeon of false beliefs. Again, multimillions of human beings would have been killed, burnt or executed and the same blood-thirstiness would have continued upto today. But that was impossible. A poison has its antidote. In the same way, low, degraded and narrow life has its antidote. It consists in the inevitable rise of persons fitted to rescue man from mental darkness and inhuman fanaticism. If there is a dissolutionary process, there is also a mightier evolutionary process. If there is evil, there is also good to destory it. If tyrants rise, liberators also rise to crush them. If there was a slave-hunter and a slave-dealer, there also came a slave emancipator. If there were lovers of darkness, there were also men who hated darkness. Hence when advocates of blind belief rose into mighty power, lovers of critical enquiry and true knowledge also rose to expose them and bring them discredit. If fanatics grew mighty, other human souls appeared to expose their ugliness and destory their might. For every evil there is a cure and it comes in the form of a human being full of repulsion for it. Men should learn to see and admire this process in Nature.

A STUDENT.—I see now, Sir, that while there are millions who advocate false standards of right and wrong, there arise human souls who because of their higher senses, establish true standard of right and wrong. In fact, man has to look up to a higher man for deliverance.

TEACHER.—Indeed so.

A STUDENT.—Is there some other standard of right and wrong which the scientists have placed before man ?

TEACHER.—Yes, there is and it relates to the attitude of

human mind. By the conquest of land, water and air and several epidemics, scientists have taken man to a new world of human experience. For ages man believed himself to be at the mercy of elements and catastrophies. Scientists taught him how potent he was because of his mental powers. They, therefore, rescued man from cringing and crawling before elements in Nature or so-called unseen powers and taught him to bestir himself and stand up and probe into Nature's treasure to extend his might. They made man self-reliant. A new moral attitude appeared according to which it is wrong to weep and whine in utter helplessness and it is right to fight with ignorance, darkness, illiteracy and superstition. When an epidemic breaks out, it is right to go to laboratories and investigate into its causes, and cures, and wrong to accept it as a case of divine displeasure. When famines break out, it is right to plan out ways and means to provide food rations to people and wrong to sit silent and mutter something. When there are earthquakes, it is right to find out ways to detect them in time to save the inhabitants and wrong to grow laziness of thought by saying that it is so destined. It is right to enquire into the causes of a thing in order to find its cure and wrong to develop inertia by leaning on the theory of fate. It is a tyranny on human mind to make it lethargic, and the right service to make it active and critical. This new standard of judging human attitude is gradually growing popular. But there are millions still who refuse to accept it and lean on fate.

A STUDENT.—It is very inspiring to have the attitude of self-help and conquest. It is most depressing to find shelter for one's lethargy and mental inertia in the theory of fate. Every attitude of accepting and encouraging helplessness is deplorable. I think those who have given us new light on what is the right mental attitude towards happenings in Nature. Such an attitude alone can develop our real manhood.

TEACHER.—True. Blessed are great souls for they are the eyes of humanity !

## HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESSES IN POLITICAL FIELD

A STUDENT.—I have, Sir, begun to realize that new standards of right and wrong are in fact provided to humanity by great souls. I would request that this point may be made clear with reference to the political field.

TEACHER.—If any day, you take up law and study how it has progressed, you will be surprised to see the marvellous changes introduced into the old systems. There was a time when even for simple theft a man was hanged; for moral lapse in sex-relation with a man or a woman not related to the guilty by marriage tie, a person was stoned; for working on Sundays he was given brutal punishment; for not believing in a certain creed he was dismissed from a job and even from sitting in the legislature; he was sent to jail for not swearing in court etc. All this has changed. Now it is inconceivable for men of this age to imagine that humanity could have been so foolish and brutal.

A STUDENT.—We also cannot imagine how anybody can be hanged for theft and stoned for adultery. It is good that all this has been changed.

TEACHER.—But do you know who has brought about this wholesome change? Change for the better is always due to man and great men. The old citadels of wrong do not get demolished by themselves. The heroic great souls undergo a lot of sufferings to win opinion for the right change. The orthodox persons wedded to false standards give a grim fight. But though great souls suffer, there can be no doubt about the final result. The victory is always with great men.

A STUDENT.—How hope-inspiring is this fact!

TEACHER.—The entire history of higher civilization and reform testifies to the truth of this statement. Hindu law had for ages denied women the right to property. Considerable changes are now introduced giving widows specially generous



rights. There was a time when woman was treated as a pariah. Today she is being recognized as equal of man in several departments of life. They have been qualified to become heads of great concerns, educational institutions and legislatures and even ministers. All these changes are of a very recent growth. Those great souls who felt the gravest injustice done to woman by a prevalent law and custom raised their voice. It was feeble and almost inaudible in the beginning, as it was drowned in the din of those wedded to injustice. But it gathered momentum and in course of time it became so mighty that it hushed others opposed to it and ultimately prevailed.

A STUDENT.—In our own times at least woman is receiving respect due to her position.

TEACHER.—There was a time when even the topmost men were doubtful about the fact whether woman had a soul.

A STUDENT.—But were they not born of woman? Could they view their mothers as soul-less? It must be a terrible darkness which can shut out from one's mental vision the fact that mother's love was the one greatest and mightiest factor for the very existence of society. Could such a love be possessed by one having no soul?

TEACHER.—You are born in better times and more enlightened atmosphere. Humanity has progressed from darkness to light. Those who have rescued mankind at various stages from darkness to light are great souls. It is the light produced in their souls by their higher powers, and not a borrowed one. In that light they see the ugliness and horror of injustice in any line and raise a voice against it. You perhaps know that a strong voice is being raised against capital punishment itself. These great souls consider it as wrong for a state to kill a man, as it is wrong for an individual to kill another. They say that if A is a murderer because he kills B, how can the state be innocent when it kills A? Several countries have abolished capital punishment altogether.

A STUDENT.—Such great souls should be thanked. It several times happens that an innocent man is proved guilty and hanged. At a later stage it comes to be known that the hanged man was not guilty but the dead man cannot be revived.

TEACHER.—This is one of the arguments against capital punishment. But the greatest reason against it is that it is an

inhuman practice. It is this inhumanity of the practice which has shocked great souls. Those who taught 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for tooth', stand permanently condemned. Those who taught stoning to death of those guilty of crime stand lost for all times. Humanity has, by the help of these great souls, come to believe that a thing is not just because the world believes it or churchmen support it or certain scriptures uphold it. It is just because it satisfies the standard of justice and fair deal as shown by experience and light of great souls. The entire criminal law regarding brutal punishment has been changed. Even the prison life is being completely changed from its vindictive nature into one of reformatory nature. "To punish is to injure, to reform is to heal." is the verdict of noble souls.

A STUDENT.—This is splendid ! But how to be sure, Sir, that what the great men say is necessarily true and worth following ?

TEACHER.—This is a good question. Nobody accepts all at once the new standard as taught by the great souls. Its newness is viewed with suspicion and mistrust. No higher yet new standard is hailed with warmth of heart. It is repulsed as if it was something forbidden. The discoverers see in their light the dark side of unjust custom or law. In their light they reveal the dark side to those who are blind to it. They reveal facts otherwise hidden from the view of those devoid of these senses. Those who are unbiased or receptive see the facts and get converted. They, in their turn, place them before others. The unprejudiced and receptive souls go on getting converted till a strong force stands up in defence of the new standard. Even the orthodox in course of time endeavour to see them. It is the facts which ultimately prevail. It is not the opinion alone, of the great soul, which becomes victorious in the end. That opinion is strongly supported by facts brought into light by great souls. It is not therefore true that the great souls merely give an opinion. They give new light in which they present new facts. It is facts as shown by that light which lead to conviction.

A STUDENT.—I can now see that it is the presentation of new facts seen by great souls in their light, which bring with them the sure seal of victory over old standards.

TEACHER.—True. Take instances. Slaves did suffer terribly.

The mere slavery stunted their growth and robbed them of even the right to be treated as human beings. But this grave injustice though a fact just under their nose was not seen by the slave-owners who were wedded to slavery. Great souls saw with their higher senses the horror and presented the facts already existing, in their true perspective. That began to tell. Hence the strongholds of slavery began to shake till the whole citadel came down with a crash.

A STUDENT.—I am now sure that higher souls come with higher light and higher senses. They are able to see what those devoid of them cannot see. I am convinced that higher civilization is possible because of such great souls.

TEACHER.—That is true. In our own time certain dramas of real life are being enacted. Dark life is being foisted in the world by inhuman aggressors. Italy reduced Abyssinia to serfdom. She killed thousands of innocent persons. She did so on presenting itself in the guise of sheep willing to serve Abyssinia and civilize it. This plea deceived none but Italy. Germany reduced Czechoslovakia to slavery and robbed her of independence. Even Britain and France accepted the fact. But the great souls have been shocked beyond measure. They are voicing their opinion. They are presenting facts of tyranny in new light. Japan is crushing China. Russia, the hitherto silent bear, began to prowl and victimize Baltic States. Everybody, as if, is out to hurt. All these dark acts are being done today by souls devoid of higher senses. They defend their gangsterism. Hence two forces have come into conflict—the forces of darkness in the shape of aggressors and forces of light in the form of great people of England, France, America and India. I am glad to see that it has become a settled conviction now that gangsterism practised even by the mighty nations is absolutely inhuman, unjust and destructive of peace and solidarity of mankind. Hence it is too late for mankind to go back. Men like Hitler and Mussolini and their supporters are bound to stand condemned as monsters and go down in history as incarnations of dark forces. If humanity is to be saved from this, there is only one hope and it lies in the growth of greater and greater number of great men who should reveal the injustice in its true colour, present the facts in new light and win a big following till the voice of these noble souls triumphs

over the world. This is the only way of safety for man.

A STUDENT.—You mean then, Sir, that the salvation and safety of mankind lies in the appearance of great souls and the triumph of their new light ?

TEACHER.—Decidedly yes. When ignorant persons, however highly placed, cry down hero-worship as man-worship, they do not understand what they speak. There are only two kinds of forces working in mankind—forces of selfishness, vanity low-hate etc., and forces of higher or altruistic powers. The first group of forces is responsible for all the sins and crimes in the world and all gangsterism and the second group of forces is responsible for all that is good and noble in human relations. The first group of forces is destructive of peace and solidarity of mankind. The second group leads to peace, higher harmony and the higher well-being of mankind. It is impossible for humanity to commit suicide. Hence the first group of forces is being viewed with horror by the awakened mankind. What is needed is that light which can show us the horror of all kinds and all forms of the forces of the first group, i.e. low-loves and low-hates—especially selfishness, vanity, self-will and low-hate—and that power which can destroy the tyrannical hold of these forces on human heart and thus give men true freedom from slavery to them. This is one aspect of the great need of mankind. The other aspect is that man-kind should get that new light which can reveal the beauty and need of various altruistic forces and that new power which can develop and strengthen them. This two-fold work when successfully carried on would usher in the era of mutual good-will, help and service in all human and sub-human relations and thus end the gangsterism by individuals or races.

A STUDENT.—Whence can this new light and new power be got ?

TEACHER.—As human manifestations endowed with one or another higher power have redeemed humanity from various darkneses and rescued it from continuing the life of injustice in some particular line, in the same way, mankind has to look for such a manifestation who should radiate this new light and this new power in the human world, so that his light may show the ugliness of all forces of darkness and beauty of all altruistic powers and liberate mankind from the dark forces and

develop higher forces in them.

A STUDENT.—How should we be sure that such a manifestation has appeared ?

TEACHER.—By studying facts and realities as presented by him in his new light. Two things alone can help us to arrive at a truth. First, light and secondly facts. When the new voice appears, we must not fill our hearts atonce with prejudices against it. Prejudices are so many dead and impenetrable walls erected round one's reason that no light can penetrate through them. Hence, to be unbiased is the first essential of a seeker after truth. When a person is unbiased, he takes one very essential step towards welcoming truth. The second essential is that he should have the capacity of receiving that light. A student, however unbiased he may be, would fail to learn mathematics if he has no capacity. When these two conditions are fulfilled—and they can be fulfilled by attitude of reverence—the third essential is to see facts in that light. When these conditions are fulfilled the humble and reverent soul becomes well-placed. It is such souls who would gather round the fountain of new light and and new power and suffer like their master all kinds of misunderstandings and persecutions for the glory of the new light and the new power. Every sane man would academically accept the urgent need of such a light and such a power. But he would not accept the real manifestation of such unique blessings because of his prejudices and predilections and certain pre-suppositions as to who can be the true manifestation. Mankind wants to dictate to Nature that it would work in the way of man's individual wishes. Nature's laws are unaffected by wishes of mankind. Being eternal and immutable laws, they work inevitably and produce a unique manifestation in perfect consonance with themselves and not to please this or that individual or group.

A STUDENT.—When humanity has resisted all along the line, even partial exponents of justice and higher life, how can it readily accept an all-sided giver of new light, new ideals and new power.

TEACHER.—In fact humanity has behaved as you have put it. Being wedded to false standards, it cannot readily accept a standard of right and wrong with which mankind has very little familiarity. To tell mankind that a man who gives up

all ties and consequently all duties and responsibilities and indulges in concentration for his individual happiness, is a perfectly selfish being and therefore not worthy of respect, is to outrage their sense of values. To tell mankind that highest life can be evolved in all cosmic relations and that it is in Nature and Nature alone that man should find the means of reaching that goal, is another shock to it as it goes against all it holds dear. Mankind believes Nature as only physical and much beneath the notice of man. The facts are the other way. But how hard it is for man to accept this new voice !

I will talk of this in my next lesson.

## ETHICAL ASPECT OF THE UNIVERSE

TEACHER.—Before I proceed with my subject, I want to make it clear to you that Nature is neither an illusion nor merely physical, as you have been taught to believe. As a tree is not mere roots; it is trunk also; it is branches and leaves also; in the same way Nature is material in its first stages; it is pulsating with life in the plant world; it is throbbing with mental life in higher animals and human beings. Nature is one great unity, comprising of mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms. They are all knit together by processes of uniformities called universal laws. All these kingdoms are inseparably connected. Let us take man. He must breathe to live. He must drink to live. He must bask in sunshine to live. He must have land to cultivate and get his food. He is thus most closely bound up with the mineral world. Calling the mineral world, merely physical and then looking down upon it, shows the attitude of an ignorant person. Human life is impossible without the so-called 'dead' (i.e., physical) world. This world gives us life.

Again, the entire plant world constitutes for all men the chief source of subsistence and joy. It is this vegetable world which constitutes chief source of inspiration for lofty ideas and immortal productions. The *Rishies* of old went and sought the company not only of great physical sights and scenes like big rivers, huge mountains etc., but even of the gorgeous splendour of trees, flowery shrubs and enrapturing sight of sweet-scented plants in order to think and produce literature. All civilized races have found it essential for their life to have grassy plots, flower beds in front of their houses and pictures of captivating sceneries of the world in their drawing rooms. Man cannot do without them. His life is impossible without these two kingdoms.

To the animal world, humanity owes its birth and growth. But for the animal world, the human world would have been non-existent much in the same way as a child is impossible without parents. Besides this, bullock, cow, horse, camel, elephant, goat, sheep, etc., have considerably helped man in his progress of life. To the animal world, man owes not only his birth but his comforts and civilization in many stages of his growth. Even today useful animal is a great friend of man. Dog and horse, etc., are his comrades. Lot of joy and comfort and lot of useful service which man receives would vanish if these our friends—the useful and innocent animals—vanished.

Human world is most indispensable for man's well-being. All the best things in literature, art, drama, poetry, architecture, science, religion, etc., which a man enjoys would be impossible if humanity were to become non-existent.

This is how all the kingdoms of Nature are indissolubly united. As top of the tree and its roots are parts of the same tree and are closely related, in the same way human kingdom and mineral kingdom which constitute the top and the roots of the same tree of Nature, are inter-dependent. Man as a rule is not able to see the great truth. Man is ordinarily believed to be above Nature, when a little thought would make him realize that once he cuts himself off from Nature, he would become extinct.

To show this great fact which already exists but which was hidden to man because of his absence of right senses, we needed a new manifestation.

A STUDENT.—It is strange that this grand fact lay nearest to every man and yet he could not see it ?

TEACHER.—It is strange but not incomprehensible. Blind man is not able to see even his own hand. Sight is a unique blessing.

A STUDENT.—Indeed it is.

TEACHER.—The perception of this grand fact is not the only vision which has been opened. If we can see how all parts of Nature are inter-connected we are shown another grand fact that every one of us is a part of this grand system and subject to its universal laws. You may perhaps find it difficult to seize this point at once.



A STUDENT.—Kindly explain it.

TEACHER.—The fact that I cannot exist at all without these kingdoms makes my point self-evident that I am a part of this grand system. As the leaf of a tree when cut off from it withers and dies, in the same way a human being cut off from the tree of Nature would wither and die.

A STUDENT.—Physically this is true. But is it true mentally and morally also ?

TEACHER.—It is true in all phases of the life of man. Some months ago, *The Times Illustrated Weekly* published, with photos, the story of two girls who seem to have been taken away by a mother-wolf and nurtured. These two girls grew up among children of the she-wolf. They walked on all fours, lived naked, howled like wolves, subsisted on raw flesh etc. They were observed by some men and rescued. A Christian missionary brought them back. The girls knew no language. It was a super-human task for the mission to train them to put on clothes. After a long training, the girls submitted to putting on clothes. They would howl at night and even prowls out. They would rush on a raw meat. They bit others like wolves. One girl died. The other grew up. Even for years, this living girl could not shake off some of the animal traits she had learnt from her foster mother—the she wolf—and her children.

This can show you that cut off from human world, a human child loses all the blessings of being a man and grows up into a beast. Can we then do without mankind ?

A STUDENT.—We cannot live without humanity.

TEACHER.—In a number of cases persons convicted to solitary confinement have lost their sanity altogether and become insane for all times. This can show you that while cut off from humanity, we lose blessings of human growth and civilization, cut off from both men and animals we feel life as a positive misery and even lose sanity. If those condemned to solitary confinement were to be given the society of pet dogs or cats or even birds, they would not go mad. I hope you can now see how mentally we are wholly dependent on man and animal worlds. All our mental life would be lost when thus cut off.

A STUDENT.—But how are recluses or ascetics, who live on mountain peak or in forest corner, able to exist ?

TEACHER.—They have friends in their selected followers,

in domesticated animals and birds. No man cut off from men and animals would for long retain his sanity.

If you once realize this grand fact you will be able to see the third great fact that as a part of this grand system, man owes the highest duty to himself of fulfilling all those laws which help him to become a useful and serviceable part of this system, otherwise he would deteriorate, decay and die. In order that my arm should live, it should help in the healthy functioning of my body. If it helps to wound my body, it should not expect in its own case to live. Hence, if a part of my body, say arm or leg, becomes septic, it is amputated because it is not only worthless but also dangerous for the body. There is a great process in Nature which by the operation of its own laws amputates the part which does not help in its building process.

What is therefore needed is that light which can show us the nature of our own heart-forces which make us diseased parts of this grand system and the nature of those higher forces of heart which help us to become healthy parts of this grand system.

A STUDENT.—Yes, as parts of Nature we must know what those feelings are which make us diseased parts and what are those feelings which make us healthy parts of the grand system.

TEACHER.—These feelings lie within us and are therefore nearest to us and yet we do not see them. This is because the unique senses which could open that world were absent in the world. In order to open that world somebody should appear equipped with those unique senses and place a new standard of conduct and of right and wrong before us.

Now the world has upto now been taught that *Sukh* or happiness is the goal of man. This is wrong. In the case of body, it is not pleasure but it is health which is our goal. Hence we do not study laws of pleasure in medicine but laws of health and disease. In the same way, the one grand fact which lay nearest to us and yet was hidden from us was that soul is an organism much in the same way as body. As an organism its highest goal can be health and growth and not happiness. And yet all systems of religion preach happiness as a goal. What a wrong ideal! This is because man was void of those senses which could reveal that fact.

A STUDENT.—I agree with you, Sir, that health and growth and not happiness can be the ideal of man.

TEACHER.—In that case all that is required is knowledge of the laws of disease, decay and death of soul-life and the knowledge of the laws of freedom from disease and evolution of soul-life-building forces.

A STUDENT.—This is too obvious to be denied.

TEACHER.—And yet majority of the people do not at all agree with you in this. It is almost impossible for religionists to see and admit that soul is an organised existence and that as such it is liable to decay and die if we, its organs, get diseased and it is liable to prolong its existence if its organs are healthy and constructive.

A STUDENT.—I see the point.

TEACHER.—Now it required complete higher senses to reveal the anatomy of soul, the nature of its diseases, the law of the freedom from them, the nature of life-building forces and the laws of their evolution in a human soul and the true goal of human life and the way to attain it.

A STUDENT.—What are the diseases of human soul ?

TEACHER.—All such heart-forces which man develops with *his own Sukh* as goal, constitute soul-diseases. These are called low-loves and low-hates. For example, love of money or greed, love of sexual satisfaction called lust, love of wife and children called undue attachments or *moha*, love of fame and name, love of power and position, love of self called selfishness and vanity, love of one's own opinion and beliefs however wrong, love of place or land, love of race or nation etc., etc. All these loves are slaveries. They lead a man to sacrifice truth and goodness or even strangle them out of existence in the mad pursuit of their satisfaction. Again, low-hates of various kinds--jealousy, vindictiveness, revenge, violence, etc.—destroy higher nature of man and work like hell-fire. All these are called soul-diseases because gradually they destroy man's capacity of seeing truth and goodness and adjusting life according to them.

A STUDENT.—What constitutes life-building heart-forces ?

TEACHER.—All higher or altruistic forces, as a rule, constitute life-promoting forces. These are reverence, gratitude, sympathy, charity, generosity, philanthropy, disinterested service, love for knowledge in any department of Nature, etc.

A STUDENT.—How are these feelings developed in fit souls ?

TEACHER.—They are developed in cosmic relations. What was therefore needed was to find out the Nature's commandments of our duties in various cosmic relations, i.e. towards our parents, our brothers and sisters, our animal friends, the plant world, the mineral world, the departed souls, the Deliverer from our soul-darkness and .evolver of our soul-life etc. The finding out of these commandments of Nature, which are uniform for all human beings, required corresponding higher senses to see them and extraordinary mental powers to couch them in language and thus give us a masterpiece in philosophy to guide us.

A STUDENT.—Has any such masterpiece been written and published ?

TEACHER.—Yes it has been.

A STUDENT.—If such a valuable book has been published, why is it that man has not hailed it as a blessing ?

TEACHER.—In order to hail them one should see them and possess a capacity to admire them. Such an eventuality is possible if either we should ourselves possess the corresponding higher senses or should be unbiased and capable enough to get the light of one who possesses them. When both these ways are closed to a man, he would feel the new voice as a strange voice, an unfamiliar voice or even a discordant voice, as it would disturb such a man's world of wrong thoughts that he has built. Such a man would feel the new voice as inimical voice. He would therefore rise to suppress it and in order to do so he would use the weapons open to him, of persecuting the discoverer and by pen and tongue represent him in dark colours and thus create irreverence for him and he would go to the length of trying to get him into jail or even kill him outright if possible.

A STUDENT.—This is very unfortunate.

TEACHER.—It is so. Those wedded to false standards of life get perverted and yiew what is right as wrong and wrong as right. They are maniacs.

A STUDENT.—Do you think the fountain head of such a precious light has appeared and existed on this earth ?

TEAAHER.—Yes, such a manifestation has appeared in the person of Bhagwan Devatma—the Founder of our Society—who is believed by us as that new manifestation who is endowed with unique senses and who by means of these unique senses

or powers discovered the commandments of Nature, which tell us what we have to do and what we have to eschew in various relations and which he has published in the fourth part of our scripture called *The Dev Shastra*. In relation to mankind alone, he has given us nearly two hundred commandments. He has declared that low-hate in any form and kind and for whatever purpose used or developed, is a fire which destroys soul-life as poison destroys body. Hence intolerance, fanaticism, bigotry and biases of all kinds which excite this hate are shown by him as so many kinds of poisons which not only blast soul-life but also break all ties however tender. He has shown us that every moment of our life that we live, is due to the fact that millions of Nature's existences make that possible for us. Hence it is our essential and supreme duty to reach in gratitude and service all those who are our benefactors. Hence life of grateful and disinterested service should be a matter of course and not a rare thing as it is now. He has shown that all those existences which help to build others build themselves. The supreme law of evolution is the law of construction. Hence if we want to construct life, we should contribute to the growth and development of the life of all our benefactors in human, animal, plant and mineral worlds. All these declarations can be verified. The Devatma does not want blind faith. He appeals to all to study the facts of Nature as revealed by him in his unique light. The unique standard of right and wrong in various relations is placed before us in *The Dev Shastra*, Vol. IV. It is up to us to study that and verify it. This is all that we need. The Dev Samaj preaches the gospel of higher life and not mere philosophy. Hence it starts its lowest grade membership by the candidates who renounce eight specified sins like adultery, bribetaking, dishonesty in certain dealings, flesh-taking, use of intoxicants, suppression of debts and deposits, etc. The promotion to higher grades is determined by higher life. They are therefore doing us injustice who think that we want conversion in the sense they understand it. We have no four anna member. We admit him as a member who rises to certain higher standard of conduct. We do not care so much for numbers as for quality. Hence those who create unfavourable opinion that we hunger for conversion for the sake of conversion are sadly mistaken.

## ALTRUISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS & SUBLIME CONSCIOUSNESS

TEACHER.—I have told you that in order to give a standard of right and wrong in all the cosmic relations of man, we want a teacher who should possess all the complete powers of soul or all sublime senses ?

A STUDENT.—What are those complete powers of soul or sublime senses ?

TEACHER.—They are those highest soul-forces which complete the soul-organism. They are: complete and all-sided love of truth; complete and all-sided hatred for all untruth in all relations of man; complete and all-sided love for all that is good in cosmic relations; and complete and all-sided repulsion for all that is evil or antagonistic to goodness in them. These forces are the culmination of the evolutionary process working in mankind. They in fact constitute the topmost level of evolution.

A STUDENT.—Are they in any way different from altruistic forces ?

TEACHER.—They are definitely distinct and immensely superior to them.

A STUDENT.—How ?

TEACHER.—An altruistic force is limited in its working. A merciful man can see simply physical sorrow and suffering of man. A merciful man may be led even by mercy to do wrong in relations. A merciful Judge acquits a murderer because the sight of the suffering of his helpless wife and children overwhelms him. A man possessed of mercy may be unscrupulous in his monitary dealings, be a bribetaker and even a debauchee.

A STUDENT.—Yes, that is true. I know of such men who rob Peter to pay Paul. Even dacoits are known to be merciful. Lately, I read in one of the papers, the story of a dacoit, who

was otherwise merciless but he paid money to hundreds of poor people and relieved their distress.

TEACHER.—That is true. In Baluchistan, a dacoit whose followers had robbed a clerk at once ordered the return of the loot because, that clerk was once his benefactor. Look at Lenin. He had unlimited sympathy for labourers or workmen. He massacred or exiled hundreds of thousands among the middle class and higher class people. Under the influence of wrong philosophy, he thought they were guilty of inexcusable sins against workers. Even women and children were executed, shot or otherwise killed, because they belonged to those classes. How unjust is all this! A man who is good in one direction may not be necessarily good in other directions.

A STUDENT.—True. I heard my parents telling me that there was a prostitute who was so charitable that no needy man who appealed to her for help ever returned disappointed. She was called "*Dani*"—the charitable.

TEACHER.—A very great man who sacrificed his considerable fund of money and energies for women's emancipation ended by having a polygamous marriage with the Lady Superintendent of his Women's Ashram. He was a Hindu. He was nearly sixty. His first wife was alive. He had children from his living first wife. His lapse from lofty standard gave a terrible set-back to the cause of women's emancipation. He was wonderfully sympathetic. But his weakness of which he was not aware, led him astray. He was permanently debarred from serving the cause he held dear. You can therefore see that one virtue does not connote the presence of other virtues.

A STUDENT.—It is clear to us, Sir.

TEACHER.—Again, the world of an altruistic force is limited. It is not all comprehensive. Charity shows bodily want of another. Mercy shows suffering of another. Generosity shows the beauty of forgiveness to wrong-doers. But none of these shows us our benefactors or virtues of others or justice to be done to others, or ugliness of dishonesty, adultery, gambling, bribestaking, etc. None of them shows the horror of vanity, self-will, low-hates, etc. None of them shows the nature of soul—its degradation and its evolution—the laws of its freedom from degradation and its higher evolution—its supreme goal etc. None of them therefore, shows a man what the effects

on his soul-life of his various thoughts and acts are. Hence no altruistic force in itself can open soul-world. When the soul-world is closed to one's view, it is impossible for such a blind person to be the well-wisher of his own inner life and the inner life of others. Hence mere altruistic forces can never give us standard of right and wrong in the world of soul-life. This is why the world needed a new manifestation who should come endowed with new set of inner senses or consciousnesses or powers and thereby reveal a new standard of right and wrong.

A STUDENT.—I can understand that the standard of right and wrong in soul-world can be given only by one who possesses new and highest forces or what you call sublime consciousnesses or '*Dev Shakties*'.

TEACHER.—It is these sublime forces which have generated light in the heart of the unique soul and which have opened before him that subtle and fine being called soul—its nature, its courses, its degradation, its evolution, the laws relating to freedom from its degradation, its higher evolution and its supreme goal etc. This is why he has placed before the world a new standard of right and wrong. He has seen all those various duties which we have to perform and the acts which we have to avoid in every one of our relations. He has given us what is right and what is wrong in relation to our parents, brothers and sisters, wedded partners, society, race, nation, humanity, animal kingdom, plant world, mineral world etc.

A STUDENT.—What is the unique standard of right and wrong which he has placed before us ?

TEACHER.—He has taught us that all our thoughts and acts which unduly harm others are wrong and all our thoughts and acts which help to build others are right. Hence all feelings which lead to wrong thoughts and acts are suicidal forces or soul diseases and all the feelings which lead to right thoughts and acts are life-building or life-promoting ones. The former feelings are called low-loves and low-hates and the latter feelings are called higher loves and higher repulsions. It is wrong to develop the former and right to develop the latter.

A STUDENT.—Kindly make it still more clear why low-loves and low-hates are to be considered wrong.

TEACHER.—Because they pervert our vision and lead us to falsehood and evil.



A STUDENT.—Why are higher loves and higher repulsions to be considered right ?

TEACHER.—Because they lead us to goodness in all cosmic relations.

A STUDENT.—Why are we not able to see the ugliness of low-loves and low-hates and the beauty and necessity of higher loves and higher repulsions?

TEACHER.—We require a particular kind of light to show us that. That light is not physical. It is not mental. It is not even altruistic. It is a light which is generated only by sublime consciousnesses and can be had only from one possessed of these sublime forces. Just let me give you an illustration.

There is a gentleman over seventy years of age. One day he narrated his story of life. He said he was a Sanatanist. He was told that he must read certain scriptures daily, take early bath daily, visit places of pilgrimage, feed Brahmins etc., and that is all that was required for spiritual life. He did all that but he weighed less when he had to sell something and measured more when he had to purchase. He was good at accounts and hence he cheated the ignorant dealers. When somebody trusted him and requested him to make purchases for him, he would enter into an understanding with the shopkeepers to give him some profit and charge his trusting customers as much as they could. Thus he committed breaches of faith. He stole amounts from his joint shop. He committed adultery and thus ruined homes. Nothing of all this troubled him. None of his relatives rebuked him for all that. On the contrary, they admired his cleverness. Society had no word of reprimand for him.

And yet his life underwent a wonderful change. How ? He came in contact with a worker of our society. The light that he received, revealed to him the horror of his filthy and wicked life. Sorrow and repentance filled his heart. He not only gave up his vices but framed a list of all those persons whom he had cheated and the probable amounts he had cheated them of. He went to every one and paid back the amounts. He returned to his partners Rs. 150 which he had taken wrongly from the common shop. This was not enough. He came to know that his father, who had died when he was only five years of age and had left nothing for him, had left standing against him a sum

of rupees three hundred. He had to labour hard to trace the descendants of the person to whom the amount was due. He found relief only when he had found the proper persons and paid them the amount. His wife had died. But she had, when alive, told him that her father had to pay Rs. 400 to some persons. Her father's heir had found shelter under the law of limitation. But this converted soul knew of no law of limitation in soul-world. He was anxious to do something for his departed wife, so he resolved to pay off the debt his father-in-law owed to others. He found out the heirs of those persons and paid the amount.

Besides that, in order to cleanse his soul of his extra-marital sexual indulgences, he not only did *sadhanas* of repentance but fined himself heavily and paid the amount as compensation to others.

So far his sins in relation to animals were concerned, he purified his heart by serving their species.

Then gradually it dawned on him that there could be no greater retribution for his past evil life than that he should sacrifice his whole life for the good of others. He gave up his business and became a life-worker of our society. He charged the society nothing even for his maintenance and devoted years of his life to unselfish service.

What a many-sided change !

A STUDENT.—This is a marvellous change !

TEACHER.—Indeed it is.

A STUDENT.—I am now able to see that what you claim is that the light of your Master opens the soul-world. It shows those who receive it, the horrors of evil-life and its past impurities. Hence such souls are enabled not only to eschew the evils for the future but purify their heart by making amends for past wrongs. Some devote their whole life as an humble return for favours received. But do not others outside your society also devote their life for some good cause

TEACHER.—They do. Some devote all their life for the good of orphans, or of widows or of the sick and suffering or in removing ignorance or even superstitions or in making researches for some work of the world's welfare. But all these services touch the body and intellect of man. Those who are inspired by this light to devote all their life for our cause, have

to do the form of service which is of a peculiar nature. They remove soul-darkness. They help others to give up sins and crimes. They enable others to cleanse the impurities of their soul. They evolve altruistic forces in their own hearts and in the hearts of others. They thereby deal with the most essential and important department of man's life, i.e., his soul-life. We believe that he serves best who illumines and evolves soul-life of man as he thereby serves the best part of man. Humanity, I mean the good part of it, has helped the hand and the head of others. But none has touched the soul. Hence we find the present deplorable condition of man. We preach this higher standard of service to others. We say that if a man gets knowledge of all things outside his self or soul but remains ignorant of his self, he loses his privilege as man. He really realizes his privilege as man who gets true soul-knowledge and evolves higher life. This is the only right course of life for individuals. Hence we judge the life of every human being by this standard. If a man has gained the world but lived in darkness about his soul-life and developed low-loves and low-hates, he has wasted all precious life. But if he has lost all the goods of the world but has gained soul-knowledge and evolved higher life he has gained everything and lost little. In his behaviour to others, we believe that he is wrong all along the line, who is bound with all by the ties of low-loves and low-hates and he is right from the beginning to the end who establishes his behaviour with others by means of true knowledge of soul-life and higher or altruistic forces. Such is the standard of right and wrong which the Devatma has placed before us.

Let me pray that this new standard may captivate the attention of all men and it is only when humanity models its life after this, that there would be an end to all vices and crimes in various relations and a wave of mutual good-will and mutual service would spread over the whole world.

## DEGRADING INFLUENCE OF FALSE BELIEFS

TEACHER.—My dear boys, I want to give you a few talks on truth and falsehood. Knowledge of truth is called true knowledge and acceptance of falsehood is called false belief. The true knowledge is a true blessing for man. Acceptance of all and various kinds of falsehoods is a curse for mankind. In order to get true knowledge, we have to obey certain laws of Nature.

A STUDENT.—Sir, is observance of laws of Nature necessary for the acquisition of true knowledge ?

TEACHER.—Indeed it is. In all our spheres and phases of life, we are governed by laws of Nature. Today it has become a settled conviction to hold that our bodies at least are governed in all their aspects by the laws of Nature. It is Nature which has determined what constitutes our food. It is Nature again, which has determined what constitutes poison for us. Individually or collectively we cannot dictate to Nature to behave as we please. We cannot dictate that what is poison should become our food. Our safety lies in obedience to these laws.

A STUDENT.—Will you please illustrate this proposition of yours ?

TEACHER.—By all means. There was an Inspector of police in Baluchistan who was very competent. He was appreciated by his department. It is said that the public also respected him, which is a rare thing in the life of a police officer. This gentleman formed the habit of drinking. He was so much addicted to it that whenever he was off his duty, he would retire to his private room and give himself up entirely to drinking. After sometime his body began to manifest the ravages of this poison. He became seriously ill. But even in his illness, he would continue drinking. The doctors gave him a

warning that he should either give up drinking for sometime or he would succumb. He smiled at the doctors and lulled his soul into a comforting belief that the doctors were mistaken, and that it was not possible for him to succumb. But Nature smiled at his folly. One fine morning the neighbours found that the doors of the Inspector's house were locked from within and there was nobody to respond to their knocks. The doors were broken open and it was found that the Inspector was dead due to drinking. His dead body was found reeking with nauseating odour of drink. So here, boys, you can see that the Inspector could not convert poison into food by his own fiat. The entire humanity would fail to dictate to Nature that drinking should be made into a food for all mankind and milk into poison for all mankind. We must, therefore, learn to find out Nature's laws and obey them.

A STUDENT.—This is a very instructive instance of the evil habit of drinking. Kindly give us more instances.

TEACHER.—It is a law of Nature that opium is not an edible for man. If a man were to take as much quantity of opium as he takes of ordinary food, he would immediately die. Humanity knows it, hence those desperate men who want to end their lives take a big dose of opium and thus pass away. Very recently a young boy who was the hope of his parents, grew stupidly sick of his life because he was not able to realize some of his worldly wishes. He got into a train which was bound for his village after taking a strong dose of opium. On the way he became unconscious. The passengers reported the fact to the railway authorities. He was taken down from the train and rushed to a hospital. The doctors tried their best to revive him, but all their efforts proved in vain. The boy died. It was a most pathetic sight to see how his father threw himself down on the ground and melted the hearts of the bye-standers by his lamentations. The law of Nature was fulfilled and the boy passed away. The law is never moved by lamentations or by prayers.

A STUDENT.—Does the law, Sir, come to motion even when some body violates it in ignorance?

TEACHER.—Boys, you must realize that law is law. Whether the law comes into motion by the deliberate act of the victim or by his ignorance, it inevitably works. There is a most pathetic

case of a fine chubby boy, the only robust male baby of a fond mother. I have seen the baby's photo. Any father or any mother would be proud to have such a baby. This baby was in the charge of a young girl of tender years who was also very ignorant. It is said that the baby felt thirsty. This girl gave him to drink some water intended to blue washed clothes. This coloured water was a poison. As soon as the child drank this water, the law of Nature was set in motion. The girl was innocent. The baby was innocent. But their innocence could not stop the operation of a law once set in motion. If some medicine had been administered in time, this poison might have been neutralised. But the poison was not neutralised. After one or two hours, the child began to show the signs of poison. The doctor was sent for. But the effect of poison had worked havoc with the child's body. The child succumbed. This was a tragedy in a home. Such tragedies will go on happening if what is dictated by Nature as a poison is put into human body.

A STUDENT.—Sir, then this is a most serious matter. Are there not certain creeds which sanction the use of some intoxicants ?

TEACHER.—Let me impress this fact once more upon your mind that it is not what humanity sanctions, which avails. It is what Nature sanctions that counts. You may consider *bhāṅg* (hemp) to be a herb of a certain deity but that won't affect the nature of *bhāṅg*. *Bhāṅg* is *bhāṅg* and will continue to be *bhāṅg*—whatever the individuals or their creeds say about it to the contrary. What Nature has pronounced to be a poison for human body shall remain a poison and what Nature has not constituted as food for man shall never become human food.

A STUDENT.—We have understood, Sir, that the poisons do not constitute food. Can you tell us what other things Nature has decreed as not eatable for man ?

TEACHER.—The entire inanimate world cannot constitute the food of man. If a man were to take clay as food, he would wreck his constitution.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, is it not true that clay constitutes the food of the vegetable kingdom ?

TEACHER.—Suitable soil, air and sunshine constitute the food of all vegetable existences. The life-power working in the vegetable kingdom converts what is inorganic matter into

organic matter for itself and it builds its body accordingly. But this is a power which Nature has decreed (to talk in human language) for vegetable kingdom only. It is, therefore, that the vegetable kingdom alone can convert what is inanimate into the living tissues of its living body. But no animal existence and no human existence possesses the power of converting what is inanimate into living cells in order to build its own body. This is why no animal or no man takes clay as food. This is why there are some medical scientists who strongly object to the use by man of mineral salts. It is their opinion that mineral salts when taken by man will harm his constitution if not purged out of his system. All the salts needed by human body are, according to these scientists, to be taken from the vegetable kingdom. It is in the vegetable kingdom that man has to find his food. You will, therefore, understand that it is the privilege of man to find out such of the laws as promote his bodily welfare and such of other laws which harm his body and its existence. It is the privilege of man to humbly follow the laws of life and protect himself from the operation of the laws of death.

A STUDENT.—I can understand, Sir, that Nature's laws govern our body. I want to know how Nature's laws govern our mind also.

TEACHER.—It is one of the fundamental laws of Nature that truth forms the food of human mind as falsehood proves its poison. A man is called more sensible, more sane, and more reliable according as he possesses true knowledge. A man is called lacking in sanity and most unreliable and therefore most dangerous, if he feeds his mind on falsehoods. One of the most fundamental laws of Nature is that when any human mind led by his pleasure-giving desires deliberately conceives or uses or preaches any falsehood or is unconsciously led to any falsehood and thereby commits any wrong or sinful act, he not only degrades others but primarily degrades himself.

A STUDENT.—Kindly illustrate this by certain incidents of life.

TEACHER.—It is a wrong belief that if a person deliberately violates the law of Nature he will not suffer if he is fated not to suffer. A very tragic case took place in my native town. There was a *haveli* consisting of a few houses which were occupied by

families connected with each other by ties of blood and creed. Cholera broke out and several persons in the adjoining *havelis* left the neighbourhood as it was most virulently infected. These few families were also requested to leave the place as it was full of danger. They laughed at the idea. They said that those who are fated to die are not going to survive even if they go away hundreds of miles. It was a sad sight to see rational beings ignoring the patent fact that a neighbourhood which was infected the most, was a harmful place for them. One of their family members died. Even then they did not move. Another died. Even then they did not move. Everyday the cholera would claim a victim from amongst them. But they were not influenced to leave the neighbourhood, till at last full nineteen members from that single group died. It was then that the survivors moved from that fatal locality. Here a false idea cost them nineteen lives. Did all that make them wiser? No, not at all. They left the street but retained the idea of a fatalist.

A STUDENT.—It is surprising, Sir, that a man should not be able to see such patent facts.

TEACHER.—When I told you that falsehood does not constitute the food of man's soul, what I meant was, that by subsisting on falsehood, man loses the capacity of accepting truth. This loss of capacity of accepting truth is the degradation of human mind.

A STUDENT.—Kindly give us some illustrations on this point.

TEACHER.—There is a true case of a young man who had come to realize that the life of man is governed by laws and not by freaks. But his wife was wedded to false ideas and was constantly afraid of her husband's going against her false ideas. She was taught to believe that if the *tonsure* ceremony of her son were not performed at the temple of a certain goddess, she would lose both her husband and her son. Her husband came to realize the untenableness of this idea. He knew that millions of children did not go for that ceremony to that temple and yet they lived, while a lot of such children who were taken to that temple died. He knew that what his wife believed did not represent the law of Nature. He, therefore, had the *tonsure* ceremony performed at home or perhaps in some neighbouring place. The wife wept and wept pitiously because she said that she will



become widow or childless. For years together this poor lady cherished this belief even though her own husband and her own son were all healthy and kicking. The poor woman was incapable to face the facts against her false belief.

I give you also my personal example. When I married, the *Brahmans* had declared that year to be most inauspicious and therefore there was no marriage among the Hindu population of my town that whole year. Mine was a solitary marriage. Besides, I refused to observe all the so-called auspicious ceremonies and the result was that many a wise man in my town at that time (that is in the year 1907 A.D.) sagely opined that either my wife would soon become a widow or my marriage would remain barren. I have lived a married life for the last thirty-four years and I have been blessed with children, but even that fact has not made hundreds of people wiser. They simply say that what they believe is true but that how I have escaped the influence of the inauspicious star is a great puzzle to them. They are not able to realize that by marrying in that season, I did not break any law of Nature and by refusing to observe the so-called ceremonies, I did not violate any law of Nature. Since I did not violate any law of Nature, it was foolish to suppose that in absence of the cause any effect was to follow. This incapacity of accepting a truth makes a man mortally afraid of very simple things. They develop a fear complex which is morally very unhealthy.

A STUDENT.—Sir, we are somewhat able to see how subsisting on falsehoods makes us incapable of accepting truth. We are anxious that this point may be made still more clear that man becomes unfit to live up to a truth when he lives a falsehood.

TEACHER.—In my long experience of life, I have realized that a man is unfit to accept any truth which threatens to demolish his false beliefs. We, Hindus, have been living for centuries on the dogma that a man is superior because he is born in a particular caste.

There was a boy in my class who was by caste an Aggarwal *Bania*. I asked him if any caste was superior to his caste. At once he said, "Sir, *Brahmans* are superior to us." I again asked him, "Are you certain that you believe *Brahmans* to be superior?" He again replied in the affirmative. Then I told him, "Would

you get a girl relation of yours married to a *Brahman*?" Spontaneously he said, "I would strike the mouth of such a *Brahman* with a shoe." I was taken aback by his reply. In theory the boy accepted *Brahmans* to be superior, but in heart of hearts he believed his caste to be *the best*. A man wedded to this false idea of superiority is incapable of judging any individual by his merit. A *Brahman* graduate told me that he had applied for the hand of a *Kshatria* girl whose father had advertised for a match for her. The mother of the girl came to see him. She was overjoyed to see that she was about to get such a suitable match for her beloved daughter. She even told him how he had met her best requirements for her daughter. She then asked him, "What is your caste, please?" He naturally replied that he was a *Brahman* but that he had no objection to enter into matrimonial alliance with a *Kshatria* girl provided he approved of her and she approved of him. As soon as he said that he was a *Brahman*, the entire attitude of the mother changed. The *Brahman* boy remained the same boy whom she had declared as the ideal match for her daughter. But as soon as he declared that he was a *Brahman*, the woman felt that she had missed something. This is how false beliefs produced incapacity to see the thing as they are. The first lesson that we teach for the development of reason is that man should be able to see the things as they are and not as his prejudices make him to see them. False ideas and beliefs develop certain prejudices against truth and in favour of falsehood. They, therefore, blind and pervert the vision of the man. This is what I meant when I said that *by living on falsehood man degrades his mind*.

## NATURE OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE

TEACHER.—In my last lecture, I tried to impress upon your mind a great fact that truth forms the food of human mind and falsehood serves as a poison. By subsisting on truth, human mind gets more and more illumined and strong while by subsisting upon falsehood, it becomes more and more deeply plunged into darkness and develops incapacity for accepting truth. This incapacity for accepting truth is a great handicap in our progress. We have, therefore, to realize more fully the horror of this form of incapacity.

A STUDENT.—What do you mean by falsehood or false belief?

TEACHER.—The knowledge of the facts, phenomena and laws of Nature, as they really exist, is called true knowledge. Any belief which is opposed to this is false, incorrect or wrong.

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly illustrate this?

TEACHER.—You can find out the truth about this in your everyday life. Every living being has to subsist on food. Now if any person were to believe that a living being can live without food, without drink, without air for a long time, his belief is false. If he follows in practice this belief, he will suffer. Again, fruits, vegetables, milk etc., are known to be our food. These are facts but if any foolish person were to believe that they are all poisons for him and that what Nature has pronounced as poisons are the real food for him, he will suffer because his belief is untrue. Every human being has to live in the ocean of air atmosphere if he wants to live. Man is not a fish or a frog. He cannot, therefore, live and continue his existence under water. If he tries to live under water, he would soon come to grief. Life of man under the surface of water is impossible. If any foolish man were to believe that he can cut himself off from the atmosphere of air and go deep into the waters and begin to live there, he will end his life. If any person

were to believe that instead of walking on the solid ground, he could walk on the surface of water by his unaided feet, he would realize that he is wrong and what he believes is untrue. Again, if a man were to believe that instead of walking on foot on solid ground, he could walk in air, he would soon realize that his belief is untrue. In order to walk on feet one must have a solid ground. In the same way, it is a false belief that a man can live in fire. If he makes an experiment, he would realize that fire destroys life. It is good that normal man is free from such false beliefs. He accepts facts of Nature as true.

A STUDENT.—Are there persons, Sir, who cannot accept these facts ?

TEACHER.—There are millions of persons who believe that a great spiritual man can live without food for years, that a sage or a saint can sit unsupported in the middle of the air, that a *Bhakta* can live under the surface of water, that a devotee is not affected at all when asked to embrace red hot pillar. Those who believe this as possible in the case of sages would never repeat the experiment in their own case. What Nature has made impossible can *never* be made possible by any individual or combination of men.

A STUDENT.—True knowledge, then, Sir, consists, in your opinion, of the knowledge of facts, phenomena and laws of Nature ?

TEACHER.—Decidedly so. The greatest proof of this lies in the fact that every science means an organized knowledge of the facts and the laws of Nature in some one of its departments. No science is possible which is not concerned with the facts and the laws in any of the phases of Nature. Science of Medicine means the facts about the body of man and laws of his health, disease and death as prevailing in Nature. Science of Botany means knowledge of facts and laws about plants. Science of Zoology means science of facts and laws of Nature about the animal world. Science of Psychology means knowledge of mental states and the laws that govern them. The science of logic means the knowledge of such laws which help a man to know what is correct thought and what is incorrect thought. So on and so forth. *Take away the facts and the laws of Nature and all sciences disappear.*

A STUDENT.—This is true, Sir.

TEACHER.—Again, no knowledge is *so reliable and so trustworthy* as scientific knowledge. This is a knowledge which is open to all mankind to study and experiment upon. The greatest strength of science lies in the fact that it is not only concerned with and confined to facts and laws of Nature but its highest appeal is to facts, logic and experiment. The best way to arrive at a truth is to use the method of logical criticism and experiment. This is why science has come to occupy the sovereign place in the sphere of human knowledge.

A STUDENT.—What does science teach us ?

TEACHER.—The greatest thing that science teaches is the *universality and immutability of law* and the *reality of Nature*. All those individuals or nations who would come to realize Nature as the greatest and only reality and its laws as universal in their application would take the first step in gaining true knowledge.

A STUDENT.—Those students then, Sir, who are studying logic and science must be lovers of true knowledge.

TEACHER.—Not at all. Most of them study logic and science in vain. They cram the facts and pass examinations. But wedded as they are to several false notions and beliefs they are not able to accept truths of logic and science.

A STUDENT.—Can you kindly illustrate this ?

TEACHER.—When I was studying in a college in the First Year, I believed that if I were to possess a charm written by a Hindu saint or Mohamedan *Pir*, I would certainly pass in the examination. Being led by this belief, I and three other students—in all four—went to a renowned *Pir* to have a charm from him. He was kind enough to give a charm to every one of us. We all appeared for the examination. Two passed and two failed. Those who failed deserved failure. While myself and another were quite upto the mark in the class and therefore we both passed. This set my mind athinking and I came to the conclusion that the unfailing factor in the success of a student is average intelligence plus hard-work. Next year again, that student who had passed asked me to go on pilgrimage to the place of that *Pir* to have the charm. I refused. That gentleman along with a student, who had failed, brought the charm. We all again appeared for the University examination. When the result was out, I passed and those two

students failed. Even after they had failed, they never woke to the fact that charm was merely a consolation of mind. It was not possible for the charm to make me possess the knowledge of history when I have not read history. How can a charm enable me to pass in English when the writer of the charm himself is completely ignorant of the English language? If the charm had possessed that power, it would have universally worked. In fact those who study logic, know that believers in charms commit the fallacy of non-observation. They never take into account the negative instances and never have patience to study the essential thing in a certain phenomenon. Those who study logic, know this fact quite well but in practical life they are not helped because they are wedded to false notions. Again, those who study science, learn that law in Nature is universal. Belief in the universality of law and belief in the miracles are contradictory things. If I believe in miracles, I cannot believe in the universality of law. If I believe in the universality of law, I cannot believe in miracles.

A STUDENT.—Would you please explain this?

TEACHER.—It is a law of Nature, and which is universal that a human child is born of human parents. Every child should have a father and a mother if he has to take birth. All over the world there are millions of people who believe that certain saints were born of mothers only, i.e., they had no father. If I believe in the universality of law, it is impossible for me to accept that as a fact. In order to have a child both sperm and ovum are necessary. Absence of any of them means absence of the conception by mother.

A STUDENT.—I have, Sir, heard that some of the scientists also believe in this and consider it to be a supernatural thing.

TEACHER.—This is true. You have just heard it but I have known brilliant science students accepting that 'miracle'. It is not possible for them to accept the truth which is opposed to their cherished religious beliefs. It is these cherished beliefs which have produced in man an incapacity of accepting facts. There are millions of persons who believe even today that a great saint fed hundreds of persons out of twelve normal loaves. The remainder of the food was taken away in twelve big baskets. This is an offence against the principle of identity and mathematics. Twelve loaves can be only twelve loaves.

They cannot be thirteen and they cannot be eleven. To feed hundreds of persons these twelve loaves are supposed to become hundreds which is opposed to the laws of Nature. But a student of logic believes it because he cannot accept a fact or reason or law which is opposed to his cherished beliefs. Such a believer becomes incapable of accepting truth. In the same way a human being who is completely dead can never be revived. Dead means dead for ever and yet there are millions who have studied logic and science, who believe that their saints had worked that miracle. These instances can be multiplied.

A STUDENT.—What is the reason that we are more prepared to believe in miracles than in the laws of Nature ?

TEACHER.—The greatest reason is first, the huge ignorance which prevails about the universality of law and secondly there are few and in fact exceptional people who have a real desire and attraction for true knowledge. And thirdly, there are crores of people who find their false beliefs comforting and get so deeply wedded to them that they hate true knowledge.

A STUDENT.—Is there universality of law prevalent even in the world of mind and soul ?

TEACHER.—Some of you are students of Psychology. You know that Psychology is a science. Psychology is a science of human mind. It clearly means that it is a science which deals with facts and universal laws of mind. Thus Psychology is true for all mankind. Nothing can be true for all mankind unless it is based upon the facts and the laws of Nature.

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly explain this ?

TEACHER.—Psychology tells us that the knowledge of human mind starts with sensations, which we receive from the objects outside us. If we cannot get some sensation from the objective world we shall have no direct knowledge of that portion of the objective world. My knowledge of a tree is possible because I possess eyes which receive sensations from the tree in the light of the physical sun, electricity or lamp, etc. These sensations are grouped into perceptions. When I see a tree often its picture is formed and retained by my mind which is called an idea. When the tree is absent, I am able by means of memory and imagination to revive its picture. All these things are possible only when I get sensations. But suppose a man is blind. He will not receive visual sensations of a tree. He will,

therefore, never be able to form a visual perception of a tree. He can at no stage of his life revive the visual image of the tree. His direct knowledge of the colour of a tree is impossible. Same is true of all other senses of man. A born-deaf man is dead to the world of sound. He must have ears and he must receive sensations before he can form auditory perceptions and ideas. This is a universal law applicable to all mankind. If somebody were to say that a saint born-blind who was completely blind and a saint born-deaf who was stone-deaf, were able, inspite of these defects, to receive sensations and form perceptions of visible and audible things respectively, all that science will say is that such a feat is impossible.

In fact, all the true knowlege that we possess has to start with sensations of the facts of Nature. But even after a person receives sensations of the facts of Nature, he must possess intellectual power to be able to discover laws. Mere physical senses would give us the picture of things but not the knowledge of laws. This is how millions of human beings see that the sun rises from the east and sets in the west and therefore they erroneously say that it goes round the earth. But intellectual powers alone help us to discover the fact that the sun is infinitely bigger than the earth and that it is the earth that goes round the sun and not the sun that goes round the earth. But mere intellect is not sufficient to enable a man to *accept* the truth which is clear to his intellect. There are millions of persons who have been taught this great truth in the schools. And yet wedded, as they are, to their cherished beliefs from their childhood, they refuse to accept it. Incapacity of accepting a patent fact, therefore, is due to our feeding our mind on false notions and absence in us of love for true knowledge.

A STUDENT.—Could you, Sir, tell us what kind of true knowledge is possible for man ?

TEACHER.—The only true knowledge which is possible for man is confined to the following four kinds of facts :—

1. The reality or existence of the various kinds of objects in Nature which are composed of matter and energy;
2. The outer *physical forms* and *inner qualities* of various kinds of these real existences in Nature;
3. The inanimate and animate *forces* of the various kinds of real existences in Nature; and



4. The immutable processes of Nature which are also called its *immutable laws*, under the operation of which various kinds of changes take place in different kinds of real existences in Nature and the facts about such changes.

A STUDENT.—It means, Sir, that according to you *Nature alone is real* and all that happens in Nature happens because of the universal processes working in Nature.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. It is not what I say but it is what the universal experience of man says. The very fact that science is called true knowledge shows that true knowledge means knowledge of the facts and laws of Nature.

A STUDENT.—Is the knowledge open to every human child ?

TEACHER.—Here also the same limitations prevail. There are definite laws of Nature which govern us in regard to the acquisition of true knowledge. In order to get true knowledge in some department of Nature a human child should possess a requisite capacity. He should have normal and sound senses, normal and developed powers of reason, certain necessary feelings of heart of varying degrees and of varying nature. It is by means of developed physical senses, developed reason and number of preliminary, lower and higher forces of heart that a man is able to step into the various spheres of true knowledge and enrich himself and others.

A STUDENT.—You have taught us, Sir, that even persons who possess developed intellect and have read certain scientific truths are not able to accept them. How can, then, developed physical senses and developed intellect help us to accept truth?

TEACHER.—Besides developed physical senses and developed reasoning powers, we have to fulfil certain other conditions before we can land into the world of true knowledge. These other conditions are as under:—

In the first place, we should shake off the domination of those lower feelings which drag us helplessly towards untruth.

In the second place, we should possess strong *desire to get true knowledge* in the subject in which we are interested.

We should *adopt the right scientific method*.

We should also possess a *strong desire* to apply the method of logical reasoning.

If we satisfy all the six conditions, we get light to know the truth.

## MENTAL EQUIPMENT FOR TRUE KNOWLEDGE

TEACHER.—Can you tell me, boys, what impressed you in the last lecture as something important?

A STUDENT.—What impressed me particularly is the fact that all our true knowledge consists of the facts, phenomena and laws of Nature. *Nature is therefore the greatest reality and the only treasure house of true knowledge.*

TEACHER.—This is true. Has anything else appealed to any other boy?

A STUDENT.—Yes, Sir, another thing that has appealed to me particularly, is the fact that this true knowledge can be directly had only by means of our developed physical senses, developed reasoning powers and lower and higher feelings. Thus true knowledge is not equally accessible to all directly. Those who do not possess any of these powers are shut out of the world which such powers can unlock. I request you to illustrate it.

TEACHER.—This is easy enough. World of form and colour is closed for all times to the born-blind. World of sound is closed to a born or stone-deaf. World of beauty is closed to those who are devoid of aesthetic sense. World of law is something hazy to those who are either illiterate or incapable of abstract thought. If these persons want direct knowledge, they must possess and develop the requisite senses or powers.

A STUDENT.—So far the results due to lack of physical senses of sight, sound, taste, smell and touch are concerned, the point is quite clear to us. But can you kindly make it more clear as to how absence of developed intellectual powers shut a man out of the world of knowledge.

TEACHER.—The entire animal kingdom is plunged into darkness so far the world of Nature's laws is concerned because it is devoid of progressive rational powers. The absence

of memory and language have put the animal world under a dreadful disadvantage. The animal ancestors are not able to hand down their experiences and knowledge to their progeny as man is able to do. It is the memory and language which have enabled man to build a rich heritage of literary achievements which pass from one generation to another. The lack of imagination has deprived the entire animal world of the privilege of making new designs, new plans, new inventions and unique artistic and architectural feats. The absence of reasoning powers has robbed for all times the animal species from seeking the laws which permeate all objects and phenomena in Nature and thus building new sciences. Even in mankind there are crores of people who lack imagination, who lack reasoning powers and are hence limited in the scope of their knowledge. They possess only elementary kind of true knowledge while they believe in lots of myths, fibs, fictions and falsehoods.

A STUDENT.—How can a human child—being so rational—get wedded to myths etc. ?

TEACHER.—There are crores of people living on this solid earth who believe the earth to be an outstretched plane when it is spheroid in shape. They believe the sky to be pillarless roof when it is not a roof at all. It is a void. It is nothing but a limitation of our horizon. They believe that the sun is smaller than the earth as it looks small to the naked eye and that it revolves round the earth; when in fact it is vastly bigger than the earth and it is the latter that moves around it. There are crores who believe that the earthquakes are due to the fact that when the bullock which upholds the earth on one of its horns gets tired, he tries to change it on to the other one, and thus a quake occurs. There are crores of persons who believe that an earthquake is an inevitable consequence of the sins of mankind. There are millions who believe that earthquakes, typhoons, all kinds of epidemics are not due to laws of Nature but to the displeasure of some gods and goddesses.

All these beliefs are far from being true. Everything that happens in the universe is due to processes which work in Nature and which are immutable in their character. Sciences of Astronomy, Geology, Meteorology, Seismology and Medicine have exploded these myths. But even then millions are not able

to accept these truths.

A STUDENT.—I also believe in many of these ideas if not in all. It is hard to believe that earthquakes and other visitations and all kinds of epidemics are due to laws of Nature and not to the sins of mankind.

TEACHER.—The scientists who have discovered the laws of these epidemics have also succeeded in boldly meeting them and saving mankind from their sweeping destruction. In some of the European countries several epidemics have been eliminated for ever. Such is the miracle of true knowledge. When we know the cause we can apply the remedy. But if we do not know the cause and attribute their origin to somebody's anger then it is not science which shall help us but a magic doctor, sorcerer or quack. In fact, everything or every phenomenon that we find in Nature is due to natural causes and not to any displeasure or anger of somebody. Man is on the firm ground only when he takes his stand on true knowledge.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, is it not true that some greatest men in the world believe in visitations in the form of earthquakes and epidemics etc., as sent on earth by some deity in order to punish us for our sins?

TEACHER.—It is true that some great men do believe in this fib. Many enlightened men however, do not. Those who believe them as consequence of our sins are not decided even amongst themselves as to what particular sin of man has led to a particular epidemic or visitation. A member of the Legislative Assembly in the Punjab said that the earthquakes in Bihar, Quetta and Turkey were due to women having abandoned *purdah*. A Hindu sage attributed Bihar earthquake to Hindus' sin of untouchability. A Muslim *Khalifa* attributed the Quetta earthquake to the sin of those who disowned his Prophethood. Science gives a version which can be verified. It is because science discovers the laws that it is able to avert the inevitable result of its disaster. Houses are being built which are earthquake-proof. In the same way mortality by typhoid is almost nil in some European lands. The recurrence of plague has been made impossible in all the American cities, because the cause was removed for ever. This is how several other epidemics have lost their terror for mankind. True knowledge of the causes of disease is man's strongest weapon to destroy disease. True

knowledge is the saviour of man.

A STUDENT.—And true knowledge, Sir, means knowledge of facts and laws of Nature.

TEACHER.—Indeed so.

A STUDENT.—Are developed physical senses and developed reasoning powers alone sufficient to get us knowledge of all the phases of Nature ?

TEACHER.—No, they are not. Physical senses give us knowledge of the outward form and attributes of objects. Mental powers take us deeper into the world of the laws which govern these objects day and night. Besides these there are other senses like sense of beauty, sense of music, sense of order, sense of cleanliness, the absence whereof keeps man out of the world of beauty, music, order and cleanliness. He who is devoid of them is disabled from getting direct knowledge of beauty, music, order or cleanliness.

A STUDENT.—Does that close the list of human powers to get true knowledge ?

TEACHER.—All these senses taken together cannot carry a man to know the ethical qualities of human relationship. Higher senses alone can help us to enter a higher world.

A STUDENT.—What are those senses ?

TEACHER.—One of these senses is called *sense of justice*. It is rare in mankind like the rarest gem. It is this sense alone which awakens man to the horrors of injustice and cruelty.

A STUDENT.—What is meant by injustice ?

TEACHER.—Injustice consists in any one's transgressing upon the individuality or proper rights and privileges of other men or animals for one's selfish gratifications. Polygamy, enforced widowhood, burning of widows, enslaving of human beings, butchering of animals are all acts of injustice. Justice was done to them only when persons equipped with the sense of justice rebelled against such practices. The Government machinery is being brought more and more on the basis of justice by the efforts of those who have developed that sense. Millions devoid of this sense, saw nothing terrible in such acts of injustice though they were otherwise learned. This sense is called higher sense because it elevates the mankind to a higher plane.

A STUDENT.—What are other higher senses ?

TEACHER.—Sense of discipline is another virtue which makes

one sublime. He who has this sense, feels bound to stand true by his right engagements in relation to another at any sacrifice to himself and thus get out of the evil of self-will. Such persons never fail to keep their right promises. They become trustworthy.

There are several other higher senses which have their roots in altruism. He who possesses any of these altruistic senses or feelings spontaneously moves to render service or help of some kind to another with whom he is not bound by any ties of low-love or undue attachment and in doing so he expects no reward or satisfaction of any of his selfish ends.

One of these altruistic feelings is called altruistic reverence. The fortunate man who possesses it, is able to see the inward beauty of the disinterested life of another and feels an urge to develop that in himself. Besides this, without favour or frown, he sings the glory of the object of his reverence and makes all kinds of sacrifices in propagating the glory of that being.

Another altruistic feeling is called gratitude. Led by this feeling, a man who has received some favour from somebody, feels himself a debtor to him and feels an urge to pay off that debt by real service.

I have dealt with these and others at length in some of the talks with you.

I have merely touched them here to enable you to understand what are the higher feelings which open new worlds of true knowledge.

A STUDENT.—Sir, are there any other senses or powers higher than altruistic powers which help us to get knowledge ?

TEACHER.—Yes, there are. They are called *Dev Shaktis*. They are composed of complete and all-sided love of truth, complete and all-sided repulsion for untruth, complete and all-sided love of goodness, and complete and all-sided hatred for evil or wrong.

## LOW-LOVES AND KNOWLEDGE

A STUDENT.—Sir, once we realize that Nature, in which we live, move, and have our being, is an infinite treasure-house of true knowledge and the key to unlock that treasure lies in possessing and developing the mental equipment, we would feel the highest interest in human life.

TEACHER.—That is certainly true. No man would feel bored, tired or weary in life if he only realizes what a wonderful world of true knowledge lies stretched before him, to explore and to revel in.

A STUDENT.—Why is it that ordinarily human beings do not make pursuit of true knowledge as the aim of their life?

TEACHER.—The tragedy is that man is more interested in the satisfaction of the pleasures he derives from his lower desires or animal passions than anything else. Though a human soul, he lives either only on the physical plane or only on the intellectual plane. He does not live at all on the plane of higher life. He feels no need of it. Hence truth and goodness by themselves have no value for him. He, therefore, feels no attraction for them. In fact man has many desires but leaving certain exceptions he has no desire for truth and, therefore, no longing to acquire true knowledge.

A STUDENT.—Is the absence of desire for truth or attraction for true knowledge a great handicap for man?

TEACHER.—It is. Let me illustrate it in your own case. All you students possess bodies. All of you are interested in prolonging your bodily existence on this earth. All of you consider bodily disease to be a curse and bodily health to be a blessing; but how many among you are interested in getting first-hand knowledge about the anatomy of your body and the laws of its disease

and health? How many of you get books from the library on the subject of health? Practically none. Again, cast a look round on your neighbours or your co-citizens and you will be surprised to see the utter absence of a desire for such knowledge in them. Those who join a Medical College, do not, in the largest majority of cases, do so with the love for gaining true knowledge about their body and the laws of its health and disease. You will be surprised to know that even after the doctors have acquired knowledge and passed examination in the science of medicine, they almost everyday violate the laws of health even in their own case. This is so because they live for pleasure and not for health.

A STUDENT.—Will you please illustrate this?

TEACHER.—When I was a young boy, an I.M.S. Doctor belonging to another province, came and took over charge as Civil Surgeon of a Civil Hospital in one of our big cities. One day, he suddenly got an attack of pain in his body. He allowed morphia to be injected in his body by his assistant. He had these injections for a number of days. Thereafter, he became fond of having these injections on one or other day just because he experienced a pleasant bodily sensation. This repetition of the nasty thing grew into an obsession with him. He grew indifferent to his duties. He resigned his job. And my elders used to tell me that they saw him begging from door to door and whatever amount he got, he spent it in feeding this evil habit.

Do you realize how low-love or satisfaction of a wrong habit makes a man shun even the true knowledge that he has got about the laws of health?

There was another Medical Officer who acquired the habit of drinking. This high Medical Officer did not require any ghost to tell him that drinking as a habit was a nuisance for his health. He had true knowledge about that fact. The true knowledge that he possessed was of no use to him because his low-love of pleasure led him to shun it or ignore it.

From these two instances it will be evident to you that so long a man has no attraction for true knowledge while he has attraction of love for pleasure, he would shun or ignore true knowledge even if he gets it through some agency. When persons who join Medical College and get true knowledge



about their health and disease, disregard such knowledge when they have to gratify their low desire, what can be the fate of those who have never even got that knowledge? In fact truth is unpleasant to a man when it stands in the way of his pleasures.

A STUDENT.—This indeed, Sir, is a very strange position. The general man is not interested in pursuing true knowledge for its own sake or for the purpose of promoting his bodily or soul-welfare. Even those who are enlightened with true knowledge by education, acquired and discovered by others, seem to possess no value for it. What a lamentable state is this for the progress of man!

TEACHER.—It is so. Leaving scientists who are led by their desire to get true knowledge about some department of Nature, the largest majority of non-scientists are not interested even to acquire this discovered knowledge. If there had been no schools and colleges to spread the knowledge discovered by scientists, I believe that all these discoveries made by them contained in books would have remained unread by humanity.

A STUDENT.—Why is it so?

TEACHER.—This is so because, as I said before, the general man is fond of the pleasure he derives by gratification of lower desires. He has no value for truth and he has no value for goodness. When he has to satisfy his lower desires, he uses his intellect. He tries to find out ways and means in order to promote his pleasure. *His intellect is subservient to his quest for pleasure. He scrupulously avoids to use his intellect in finding out the wrong side of pleasure.* By continuous pursuit of pleasure, he develops very strong loves called low-loves. They become the dominant factors of his life. They become the masters of his intellect. They do not let his intellect explore those regions of knowledge in which his low-loves are not interested.

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly illustrate this?

TEACHER.—Take the instance of thousands of graduates who are being produced as finished products by our universities. Try to find out how many among them continue to keep up their interest in their further studies. More than ninety-nine per cent among them confine their life interests in reading daily newspapers or various works of fiction and these also not by standard writers. Their entire interest in their life is confined to earning money. I know of a graduate who was very promising.

His university result was very brilliant. He always secured a high division. He took his degree in Honours. He was given University Scholarship to prosecute his studies further for M.A. He happened to meet a professor of his college who did not deserve to be in this profession. He told him that educational line was no good for a man of his ability. He complained to him how by becoming a professor (though he was drawing a few hundreds a month) he had cut a sorry figure in money matters. But his college-mate who had graduated in law and began practice, had amassed some lakhs. He wound up his oration by saying, "I curse my lot because I have become a professor. I envy my friend who became a lawyer, so please take to law." This youngman was lured by the prospects of easy money in law and took his degree in law. His fate is tragic. He was a budding poet. He was a fine writer. As an educationist, he would have produced something and yet he has produced nothing. His life has been switched off from the world of knowledge. He did not even make a pile. He neither got wealth nor further knowledge. His life proved an arid desert.

Lure of money is the dominant note of the life of almost every student. Hence his degrees are prostituted in the service of money. The low-love of money is the god of millions of graduates. Thus our finest intellects are yoked in the chariot wheel of the goddess of wealth. They shun the goddess of knowledge.

A STUDENT.—This is no doubt true. I can understand now why our great province has not given us, in the modern age, even one writer of All-India fame.

TEACHER.—Love of money is not the only low-love which has won to its side the general man. Love of position and love of power are other two dominant factors of the life of even the highly educated persons. Those students who stand very high in the competitive examinations and enter All-India or State Services are quite happy with their lot and they employ all their attainments feeding their love of power and position. They have largest chances of observing life in all its phases. Yet it is rarely that they would sit down to produce something of great value in the domain of literature, history, custom and law. I sometimes see that while a few persons who have been occupying the highest posts have enriched literature of their

land, the overwhelming majority of them have lived and died as unproductive people. They have no interest beyond their official duties. They have abundant chances of study and getting knowledge but they have no interest in study or knowledge. They shun creative work.

I know of a brilliant writer who wrote for various journals so long as he was a pleader. As soon as he was taken up in the State Administrative Service all his interest in various problems ceased and he had only one interest in life, i.e., his official duties. He put in the fullest tenure of service. He retired. As soon as he retired, he joined some firm which was engaged in some trade. Thus the biography of his life was that he was a civil servant all his life and became a merchant at the sunset of his life. He has conferred no benefit on humanity. And, therefore, humanity would be justified in saying that the only benefit that such a man would confer on earth would be when he dies, because then he will no longer be a burden on it.

A STUDENT.—It is tragic, Sir, that our best intellects are going waste because they are busy in ministering to their low-loves or their selfishness.

TEACHER.—It is tragic. But it is none-the-less true. The misfortune is that man is encouraged in the life of selfishness. He is taught to believe that nothing pays in life as wealth or good position. When he goes to school or college he hears the same thing dinned into his ears that school or college education has got only one object in life and it is to get him a job. When he grows up, the society impresses on him the fact that he is not going to be recognised unless he makes a pile by any means—fair or foul—or secures some job in government service. He rarely meets a man who could tell him that money and job do not constitute the essential purpose of his life. Pursuit of knowledge and higher character constitute the most essential things for a rational being. As a goal of a tree lies in developing the capacity of giving fruits and flowers, in the same way the goal of a man lies in yielding the harvest of rich knowledge and disinterested service of mankind. By illumining his mind with true knowledge about himself and by development of such character forces as make him creative and fruitful for others, he lives a full life as a true rational

being. The life limited by lower desires or dominated by self robs man of the chance of living a full rational life.

A STUDENT.—Why is it that man does not realize that an illumined mind and higher life are the real privileges of a rational mind ?

TEACHER.—The illumined mind and higher feelings have no place in the programme of selfishness which a man has made for himself. There was a man who used to attend my meetings. He was taking bribes and he changed. He lived an honest life for several months. One day he came to me and asked, "What is the net result of my honesty ?" I replied, "The net result of your honesty is that you are honest and not corrupt and that you are not unjust to those who come to you in your official capacity and you are not faithless to your masters." He seemed stunned to hear this reply, for he said, "Shall I get nothing after death ?" I was puzzled by his question and wanted to know what he meant by that. Then he asked me if his honesty would get him a birth in a rich family in the next life ? When I told him that the immediate and lasting effect of his honesty was on his character, he just shook his head in disapproval and went his way. The next day he went and took bribes and never again saw my face. In the dictionary of a selfish man such considerations have no value.

A STUDENT.—Sir, this is a very instructive example in the study of human life.

TEACHER.—Similar is the case with various other low-loves.

I want, therefore, to impress upon your mind the fact that all heart-forces which are rooted on self and which every human child unfortunately develops, are directly and definitely opposed to attraction or love for true knowledge.

## KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

TEACHER.—I wanted to make it clear to you that desire for truth and attraction for true knowledge are indeed the most blessed things in the life of a man. I have also tried to explain to you that a heart dominated by low-loves and low-hates is completely unsuitable for the existence of desire for truth or attraction for true knowledge for its own sake. Such a heart hates truth and goodness.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate this ?

TEACHER.—There is a very insignificant instance which I am going to give you but which has been very instructive for me. A poor man came to me with a request that I should recommend the case of his son for the concession of fees to the Headmaster of a local school. I sent a member of my staff to the Headmaster with a personal request from me that he should grant the concession to the poor man's son. The Headmaster at once acceded to my request, but he told the member of my staff how that poor man had once made an absolutely false complaint against him to the authorities. When the member of my staff returned, he narrated the whole thing to me in the presence of that poor man. He (poor man) was so shocked by the truth having been revealed to me by the Headmaster, that not only did he not avail himself of the concession but he developed a feeling of deep hatred both for the Headmaster and for the member of my staff. Months have passed and still that hatred scorches the heart of that poor man. He felt the truth as a dagger thrust against his self-love and hence hated the truth and the truth-giver. Such is the diseased psychology of an average human mind.

A STUDENT.—Sir, it is a very surprising instance.

TEACHER.—When I was in college, I hated the habit of

teasing others. In fact I could not bear anybody being teased. One day one of our club-mates got Rs. 50 by money order but he negligently left the amount on his bed and went to the college. Two students saw his mistake and took the amount and wanted to give him an unhappay time. I was also present when they took the amount. I told them that if they wanted something for a feast, I would get them the amount, but that they should not tell him that the money was lost and thus make him miserable. They grew violently indignant with me and said that they would teach me a lesson if I spoiled their fun. I did not care to notice their threat. I went to the boy and told him how he had left his amount of Rs. 50, how it was taken by the two boys whom I named. The owner at once went and took the amount from them. Because by speaking truth, I had spoiled their morbid pleasure, they became indignant and gave me thereafter a very bad time. I suffered silently but could not change my nature. After sometime when they had spent their fury and I had calmly suffered at their hands, they, however, began to repent.

I know of a highly cultured man who formed an undue attachment with a woman. The fact was known only to his wife. She protested with him but he did not care to notice her protest. She then went and complained to their mutual benefactor. The wrong conduct had not pained that educated man but the exposure of his wrong conduct made him so very furious at the conduct of his wife that he became a fiend. This is how slaves of a pleasure resent truth.

You can, therefore, understand me that it is not truth that a man wants but what he wants is the gratification of his pleasure. Such persons even strangle truth.

A STUDENT.—How do people strangle truth ?

TEACHER.—People strangle truth when they distort it to suit their selfish or low purpose. False commentaries are written on authoritative books in order to show that they carry a meaning which they never intended. At sometime in our country it was considered a mark of great learning if some *pandit* could prove even his mistake to be a correct thing. Those who can distort truth so mercilessly and so deliberately cannot be presumed to possess a desire for truth or love for true knowledge. Those who try to prove their mistakes to be correct

things help untruth rather than truth.

A STUDENT.—This indeed is painful.

TEACHER.—It is painful. People mistake cleverness for truth. A clever man is not one who has desire for truth; he is one who has genius to serve his purpose. If truth serves his purpose, he would accept it. But if it does not do so, he would strangle it out of existence.

I believe I once told you the story of a journalist who was a prominent worker of a thiestic denomination. He was writing a lot against us. One day, my friend and I went to see him for some work. When we were seated with him all alone in his chamber, he said, "My young friends, I have respect for your Guru and for your Samaj. Your Guru at least is wonderfully honest in his professions. When he gave up belief in supernaturalism he did not cheat the world by pretending belief in it. He suffered but he stood firm. I admire his courage of conviction. But look at me. I have given up belief in God long ago and yet in order to serve my own ends I am maintaining my connection with an avowed thiestic denomination and am reckoned as one of its prominent members." I was amazed to hear that confession from the gentleman. Here was a man who was strangulating truth in order to serve his selfish purpose. Man does greatest harm to himself when he lacks in honesty. I am sometimes amazed at the audacity of those who come and give me an advice that I should declare myself outwardly to be a believer in one or another God. They say all this in good faith but they do not realize the horror of dishonesty in conviction.

In the same way, once I was travelling with a young man who owned a law publishing house. He was a fine young man and a brilliant one. He travelled with me for nearly twentyfour hours. When he came to know who I was, he said, "Let me tell you that I believe in no religion and, therefore, in no God and yet I am connected with a powerful thiestic organization because it pays me to be its member."

Such people strangle truth. Honesty in profession of one's convictions is most essential in the religious world. Hypocrisy in matters of soul is never excusable. But there are people who consider that convictions mean nothing, that in the world one should become worldly, i.e., ready to say

anything if it serves one's purpose.

A STUDENT.—Sir, do you mean that hypocrites in religion are the most dangerous people in the world?

TEACHER.—Yes. Hypocrites are dangerous people everywhere because hypocrisy is fatal to truth. A hypocrite can never be trusted to be honest and true.

Untruth in politics is considered the best of weapons. Once in Bombay I read a poster in which it was declared that prominent political leaders were expected to come and deliver speeches there. I was attracted by their names. I went there and to my utter disappointment I found that all those political leaders whose names had attracted me, were absent. I enquired from some educated gentleman standing near me who seemed to be connected with the organizers, if those particular leaders were at all to come. What he told me simply stunned me. He said, "They were never expected to come." I asked him, "Why did you include their names in the poster?" He replied, "But for the glamour of their names, the people would never have assembled in such large numbers." I remained silent and cursed my ignorance about the reign of duplicity in politics.

I met another political man who was leader of youths. Some young men had resorted to *satyagraha* in order to achieve something. They sent for a party from another place by circulating a lie that their *satyagrah* was a success when it was simply crumbling. I enquired of their leader why such tactics were used by these youngmen at the threshold of their life. He smiled and said, "Everything is fair in love and war." Those millions of people who are being fed on this stuff can never appreciate truth for its own sake and would never feel a desire to know the truth. To such millions truth is an anathema.

A STUDENT.—To enter politics, then, Sir, is hardly congenial to the growth of the feeling for truth?

TEACHER.—Politics regards truth as an encumbrance. Lies grease their wheels. Besides this, let me take the case of the profession of law. Only recently the Allahabad High Court lamented the fact that it was very difficult to get a true witness in any case and that perjury was almost a universal disease. All judges and magistrates who have had to deal with witnesses, will atonce corroborate the view of this High Court. A



profession where perjury is so widely prevalent is hardly a fitting environment for the growth of desire or attraction for truth. On the contrary, such an atmosphere would destroy the very desire for truth. This is why the litigants and their advocates are all intent on winning a case and not upholding a truth. That advocate is considered a brilliant one who can make the truth appear as falsehood and falsehood as truth.

Besides this, in all ordinary professions, the businessman considers truth to be a misfit. My own revered father dealt in sugar. My grand-mother used always to complain that he was not a great success because he could not tell lies.

Once I went to Simla for collection of funds. I went to a shopkeeper with my friend and asked him where the *Seth* was? He said that the *Seth* had gone out. Thrice or four times we both, myself and my friend, went to that shop and always that man was present and he always said that his master was out. When we saw him for the fourth time and we were returning disappointed a man who heard us talking to that man on the shop, at once said, "My friends, the person who is sitting on the shop is himself the master of the shop. Go and confront him with my statement." We went back to the man and asked him why he had told a lie that he was not the master. Utterly unabashed he said, "What if I told a lie! That is something ordinary. I did not commit theft thereby." This man did not consider lie to be a sin or something bad. He thought theft to be bad.

Once a very competent and successful businessman told me, "My friend, we do not mean what we say and what we mean we generally do not say. Business is a game of chess. You have not to think of truth. You are to think of success. If you can succeed by truth it is all right. But if we succeed by a lie, as we generally do, we don't care a fig for truth."

From these things you can understand that there is no atmosphere for encouraging truth speaking in various professions. After all truth like other feelings must demand suitable social environments for its growth and if we find this atmosphere absent it is idle to expect humanity to grow the desire and attraction for truth. This is why this desire is found in very rare souls.

As truth alone can illumine the mind and lead our life

correctly, the absence of this desire is one of the greatest calamities for man. That Nature is an infinite treasure-house of truths is one great reality. That both our body and mind are products of Nature and obey the universal processes or laws of Nature is another great reality. If we want to wish well to our body and mind, we must grow a desire in us to get the knowledge of those laws which promote the life of our body and mind. If we pass our life in ignorance of these laws or take a perverted view of them or violate them, we are bound to suffer and suffer heavily. We shall in that case be passing our life in a struggle for non-essential things and miss what is most essential. In order to realize these truths and accept them we need suitable environments. Such environments are called higher because they develop higher things in man, i.e., desire and attraction for truth.

## FOUR KINDS OF LIGHTS

TEACHER.—Desire for true knowledge is one of the splendid feelings in man. But this desire can achieve its purpose under certain conditions. One of these conditions is that one desirous of true knowledge should get the requisite light for the purpose. Without this light his desire, however keen it may be, would not find fruition.

A STUDENT.—Is there a single kind of light or various kinds of light needed by a seeker of truth to enter his particular world of knowledge ?

TEACHER.—There are more than one kind of light needed to help us in our quest of true knowledge. Let me give you an illustration so that you may yourself be able to understand these lights.

There is a true story of a gentleman who was sleeping on the roof of his house. This was perhaps the highest storey of the house. The roof had no parapets. At mid-hour of the night, he got up to urinate. It was a dark night. While moving on the roof, he walked over the edge and fell on the lower storey. He received serious injuries and was in bed for some months. Here the gentleman had his eyes all right. Could you tell me why it was that he fell down ?

A STUDENT.—There was no light, Sir, to warn him of the danger.

TEACHER.—What is the nature of the light which he needed ?

A STUDENT.—It is called physical light. It may have been the light of the moon or a lamp or a torch, etc.

TEACHER.—Let me give you another story. A pleader had been engaged by somebody to represent in the court of a *Tehsilder* which was at the distance of eight miles from the

nearest Railway Station. The best conveyance in those days used to be camels. This Advocate had engaged a camel-driver. In his presence, the pleader got rupees five hundred from his client. The camel-driver saw that the pleader put the amount in his suit case. The pleader was an experienced man. He knew that carrying such an amount in his suit case when he had to travel on camel-back during the last hours of the night, was a dangerous thing. He, therefore, sent for his client and instructed him to send the amount to his address by money order. The client did as he was ordered and brought him the receipt. The camel-driver was not aware that the money was despatched by money order. He was greedy and he had planned to steal the amount. At about 3 A.M., the camel-driver came to his house and took him towards the station. At about 5 A.M. or at some earlier time, he felt the call of Nature and requested the camel-driver to let him go for it. The camel was made to sit and the pleader went into the nearby jungle. As soon as he came out he found that the camel-driver had run away with his suitcase. It was a pitch dark night. Suddenly he heard a strange noise of some animals running through the jungle. Not being able to see anything his fear over-powered him so much that his hair literally stood on end and his cap was thus lifted up. This is the fact that the pleader himself communicated to me. It was a winter night but he perspired. After sometime, a man passed by him. As soon as he came near him, he asked the man how much he would charge him to take him to the railway station. The man charged him rupees two cash down. He gave him the amount and to his great surprise after two minutes the man brought him to the station. Had it been a day, he said, he would have seen everything and even the station from that position. His fear and ignorance made him a victim. Could you tell me to what his fear and ignorance were due ?

A STUDENT.—This is clear, Sir, that it was due to the absence of light. Had it been day-light the sound caused by the running animals would not have terrified him at all, and his guide would not have cheated him of two rupees.

TEACHER.—I would give you another story more impressive than this. This story was published in papers two or three months ago. A man was found dead in his house. He was quite

all right. His dead face showed a terror stricken look. The neighbours found that his feet were entangled in a rope and they came to the conclusion that in the darkness of the night while going somewhere his feet got entangled in a rope which he mistook for a big snake, and he died out of the fear of the imaginary snake bite. Would it have been possible during day or in the presence of light?

A STUDENT.—No, Sir.

TEACHER.—From these instances you can therefore, conclude that in order to see physical things, we ought to have physical light. The mere possession of eyes is not sufficient.

Again, in a lake in some mountain caves, the explorers discovered that the fishes which moved about were all blind. That lake was cut off from light. It seems that these fishes or their ancestors had entered the lake at some time. As they were permanently cut off from light their eyes ceased to function, with the result that after sometime they lost altogether their eye-sight. I hope you understand that if our eyes are cut off for a long time from light, they will cease to function and we will be deprived of eye-sight.

A STUDENT.—We do understand, Sir, and therefore we do realize the extreme importance of physical light both for preservation of our eye-sight and to guide us in our knowledge of external things.

TEACHER.—Now that you have understood the nature and importance of physical light let me tell you about another light.

Once I was going in a tram-car in Bombay when all of a sudden the tram-car stopped. Something had gone wrong in its machinery. There were about forty passengers in the tram but all felt helpless. They had eyes and they had the physical light but what was absent that made us all helpless?

A STUDENT.—I can understand, Sir, that there was absence of requisite knowledge to see what was wrong.

TEACHER.—After sometime, an expert mechanic came on the scene and it took him hardly two minutes to set the tram-car going. This mechanic had eyes like ours. He, like us saw the external form of the tram-car. He had intellect as we had ours but yet he possessed something more which we did not. He opened his intellectual eyes in the intellectual light. That light was absent in us. And it was present in the mechanic.

But for this light even men with intellect were helpless.

In the same way, about a week ago, I read in a paper of the heroism of some Sikh youths who saved the lives of three or four Mohammedan ladies. A house caught fire. All the exits of the house were on flames. There was no other way for the ladies to come out. Suddenly four youngmen out of the mob that had collected there, took up their hatchets and climbed over the roof. They began to dig the roof and make a big hole and they succeeded. Then they threw the rope to the ladies and lifted them out one by one, and thus saved their precious lives. Here, only four youngmen out of the big mob caught the idea of how to rescue the women, while the others felt helpless. How did the four young men visualize the idea of the rescue of women?

A STUDENT.—We can say, Sir, that the idea flashed in their minds.

TEACHER.—This means the same thing as to say that in the light which illumined their minds, their intellect saw the way of escape. Difference between one intellectual man and another intellectual man is the difference of mental light. The resourcefulness of brain is nothing but the possession by the man of a special mental light.

There are millions of illiterate persons who possess intellect all right. But you will fail to convince them that the earth is not an out-stretched plane but it is a spheroid planet. It is quite clear to you that the earth is round because you are opening your intellectual eyes in the mental light communicated to you by your teachers. But it is hard for the illiterate to believe it. In the same way, it is easy for you to believe that the earth revolves round the Sun and is travelling in the space at the rate of thousands of miles a minute. But all this would be an enigma to your illiterate brother. Possession of rationality is not enough. Possession of growing mental light is an essential thing.

Before Sir Issac Newton was struck by the phenomenon of the apple falling to the ground, millions of persons had seen it and other bodies falling to the ground. Ordinarily their mind did not ask the question why. If some person was struck by the phenomenon, he had no capacity to find out a solution to the question. When Sir Issac Newton asked the question, he did not

find the solution at once. His mind went on working till at last in the fullness of time a new light illumined his mind and in that light he saw the great truth in Nature called the Law of Gravitation. His contemporaries possessed rationality. They possessed education all right. But their mental powers were not able enough to generate a new light which the mental powers of Sir Issac Newton succeeded in producing. He communicated this light to others and gradually the minds of others went into a mood of receiving the light and thus this great truth became a common property of millions of students of science.

You can, therefore, see how a truth is discovered in Nature. We require not only physical light but also another light. Will you tell me by what name you would call this light?

A STUDENT. — This is, Sir, mental light.

TEACHER. — The world which the mental light opens to us is quite different from the world which the physical light opens. The physical light reveals to us the forms and colours of the physical objects and even of our own body. But it is the mental light which helps us to penetrate the inner nature of the objects and discover the laws which permeate them. It is the mental light which has given to man an infinite superiority over the entire animal world. It is this splendid light which has given superiority to one nation of human beings over another. The more we realize the importance of this light the better it is for all of us.

A STUDENT. — Is there any other light besides these two lights?

TEACHER. — Let me give you illustrations to enable you to see the truth for yourselves.

In one of my talks, I gave the story of the life of the revered mother of Mahatma Vidya Sagar. It is said that when she was very poor and possessed only one bed for herself and only one quilt to protect herself from cold, a half-naked beggar-woman with a baby in her arms came and stood before her threshold all shivering. As soon as the mother saw the desperate and miserable condition of the poor beggar-woman and her baby, she was deeply touched, and without caring what would happen to her, she brought her quilt and handed it over to the beggar-woman. She did not care to think what would happen to her after she had parted with the only quilt she

possessed. This beggar woman had gone to the doors of several rich people in the same condition. But either she was driven out with harsh words or dismissed with insignificant charity. What was the new factor present in the heart of this great mother which made her to make such a huge sacrifice?

A STUDENT.—Kindly tell us what new factor worked in that great mother's heart.

TEACHER.—This was another kind of light which was present in her heart. It was neither physical light nor intellectual light which could show her what she saw. In the new light which flooded her soul this great mother saw the true vision of the real misery of that beggar-woman and melted in the agony of her sorrow. The beggar-woman's misery appeared to her in its true colours and it was impossible for her to ignore that. She could find relief from the sorrow, which she felt at the poor woman's misery, by removing that misery. This powerful feeling to remove another's sorrow made her oblivious of her own suffering. This light is called the altruistic light.

A STUDENT.—What do you mean, Sir, by altruistic light?

TEACHER.—This light is an inner light. It is generated only in the hearts of those who possess or who have developed one or other higher other-seeking feeling. Those hearts which are devoid of the other-seeking feelings are also devoid of this light. This is why a selfish man is generally or always callous, hard-hearted, unjust, oppressive and sometimes fiendish. He is not affected by the sorrow of another. He is not affected by the misery of another. He is not affected by the state of ignorance of others. In fact, he is affected only by his own sorrows, and only by his own happiness. Such a person would have the whole humanity ground down under juggernaut if it serves his selfish purpose, i.e., if it helps to relieve his sorrow or adds to his happiness. So far as others are concerned, he is blind, deaf and dumb. He has no eyes for the good of another. He has no ears to hear the laments of another. He has no tongue to defend an under-dog. He is a man without humanity, a rational being with the monstrous nature of man-tearing animals in him. If such a selfish man is a leader of a nation, he would destroy the nation. If he is a conqueror, he would trample on the living bodies and the living hearts of the vanquished, whether men, women or children. Absence of this



altruistic light, therefore, is not only a serious loss to the individual but it is a menace to the well being of others.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate this?

TEACHER.—I recently read a story of a young woman who looked a very simple and innocent lady. She joined a nursing home and surprised those in-charge by refusing to accept even an honorarium. She worked day and night and all *gratis*. She was interested in one child. The Medical Officer in-charge of the nursing home, was astonished to see that the child did not respond to the best treatment given to it. After sometime, this innocent looking nurse requested permission to take that dear child to a specialist in another town. She took the child and it expired on the way. The parents of the child were very grateful to her and they invited her to their house. After sometime, both the parents of the child developed certain symptoms which puzzled the doctors. The mother died and the father was rescued from the jaws of death by the herculian efforts of some sympathetic doctors. And yet no suspicion was roused anywhere. When in another case this simple-looking nurse was caught poisoning others then she narrated the story of how she had poisoned the child on the way to the specialist and how she had paid the kindness of the child's parents by sprinkling poison on their food. Can one conceive of a worse fiend? She was guilty of having poisoned to death more than half a dozen people before she was brought to book.

A STUDENT.—This is a horrible case, Sir.

TEACHER.—All selfish people are horrible. They lack the light which can show them the sacredness of another's life, the suffering of another's life, the pain of another's sorrow, another's misery, another's poverty, another's misfortune, etc. They neither have the eyes to see the sacredness of another's existence and his privileges nor the ears to hear the sound of his misery. They are, therefore, never moved. When their selfishness assumes an extreme form and no brake is applied by any other feeling or by any other consideration, the selfish person becomes a fiend.

We have read how Nero fiddled when Rome was burning. Here is the case of a man who was busy in his own music when people and their property were being consumed by flames.

In the Sukkur riots, the Government admitted that led by

the hellish flame of communalism some persons set fire to several houses of the people of another community thereby not only destroying property worth lakhs, but even burning alive innocent men and women. Communalism is one of the fiendish feelings which destroys all sense of 'altruism'. It is sad that people do not realize that by inflaming the communal fanaticism they are developing a race of fiends for the world. All this fiendish nature and all this horror cannot be clear to any person either in the physical light or in the mental light. It can be shown in its ugliness in the light of the corresponding altruistic feelings. The sense of justice will stop a man from doing injustice to another. The sense of mercy would stop the hands of a man by which he inflicts undue pain on another. The sense of generosity would stop a man from the narrow and destructive urges of revenge—a generous heart would forgive. Sense of sympathy would produce an urge in man to help another without caring for caste or creed. All that we need in an individual or a race is the growth and development of altruistic feelings if we want to reduce the groaning load of misery which is pressing so heavily on mankind. But it is sad that mankind is busy in fomenting baser passions and discouraging higher or altruistic nature. This is a tragedy of the present stage of mankind. This tragedy becomes more acute when we realize that there is no appreciation even for those who are busy in the holy and most needed task of weeding baser desires and growing higher feelings.

A STUDENT.—Does that complete the list of all lights ?

TEACHER.—The physical light reveals physical objects. The mental light reveals the laws working in the physical and biological worlds and is, therefore able to give us various sciences. The altruistic light is able to take us out of the hell of selfishness and reveal to us the fact that others exist and that they are entitled to as much respect as we have for ourselves and that their sorrow is our sorrow, their misery is our misery, their suffering is our suffering, and that in the betterment of others lies our betterment and in the act of harming others we harm ourselves.

But there is another world which none of these lights can open. This world is called the world of soul. The fourth kind of light reveals to us the nature and anatomy of soul, the laws

of its evolution and dissolution, the ways and means of liberating a man from the dissolutionary courses of life, the ways and means of evolving evolutionary courses of life, supreme goal of soul, etc. All these truths about soul require a corresponding light to show them to us. Bereft of this light we must grope in darkness and talk about soul in blundering ways. Let it be understood that a physical light cannot reveal the world which mental light alone can reveal, in the same way none of these three lights can reveal the world of soul which the fourth kind of light alone can reveal. When any person's heart is flooded with this light, his soul-life becomes a real thing to him and not a matter of imagination or metaphysical flight. A man flooded with this light sees very clearly all his lower and baser feelings called low-loves and low-hates as soul-diseases which vitiate the form, inner being and the constructive power of the soul. A man whose heart is flooded with this light cannot bear to see himself dominated by low-loves and low-hates, and therefore, he struggles hard to get the power to break their chains. A man flooded with this light sees the necessity and the sublime duty of the higher feelings which he longs to develop in himself and which he struggles hard to develop by means of this new power. In fact, a man who is flooded by this light becomes altogether a man of new world.

A STUDENT.—What is the name of this light, Sir ?

TEACHER.—This light is called *Deva-Joyti*. Devatma possesses it for he has evolved complete love of truth and goodness.

## SOUL-DARKNESS

TEACHER.—In the last lesson, I narrated the four kinds of lights which reveal to us four different worlds of true knowledge. True knowledge of everyone of such worlds is a great blessing. But the supreme blessing for man is the true knowledge about his soul-life. It is by this true knowledge alone that he may be able to do himself and others the greatest possible good.

A STUDENT.—What do you mean, Sir, by soul-knowledge ?

TEACHER.—By soul-knowledge, I mean the knowledge of that most essential part of man, his life-power or soul. It is a truism to say that self-knowledge is the supreme knowledge. If a man is enlightened about the three worlds and is blind about his own self, he can never be called truly enlightened. The greatest dramas of life are enacted in the soul-world. If we are not aware of what drama is being played by our soul-powers while we are aware of what takes place in the physical world, we shall rightly be called unenlightened and stupid.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate the nature of dramas enacted by our soul and the horror of ignorance which prevails in our mind about them ?

TEACHER.—In one of American books I read the story of a great artist. It is said that the artist had a genius for his work. His productions won very high place in the exhibitions. He grew very famous and so there was a roaring demand for his works. The writer says that he met the artist four or five years after. He examined his works and found that they were not upto the standard expected of that artist. Since there was a huge demand for his works and he was anxious to earn money, he did not care to put as much mind

into his productions as he used to do. "The saddest part of the whole tragedy was," says the writer, "that the artist was unaware of his fall." This unawareness of his own degeneration was nothing but a symptom of soul-darkness. A great artist had fallen from his pedestal and he was falling still deeper and yet he was blind to the fall. Here a great drama was being enacted in his life and yet he was unaware of it.

A STUDENT.—This is a very instructive illustration of soul-darkness.

TEACHER.—When you grow up and move with eyes open you will see lots of such tragedies.

There was an extraordinarily handsome young man—a son of a wealthy person and himself a very capable business-man—who was rising in life. He was a married man and had one son and one daughter. Very great things were expected of him when he was in the world of trade. One day the world was shocked to hear that this promising young man having a beautiful wife of his own, fell under the lure of another beautiful woman whose husband had gone to a distant part and had been absent for seven years. This woman, too, was the mother of two sons. When the husband of the mistress of this young man returned, he prosecuted the young man and got him sent to jail for six months. This fallen man left his profession. He left his wife and children. He left his relatives and connections. And having taken his mistress, he began to live the dirtiest possible life. Both, he and his mistress, opened a gambling house in order to maintain themselves. Day and night his house was the haunt of bad characters. The greatest tragedy was that he was completely unaware of his greatest social, economic and moral degradation. His was the case of a prince leaving his palace for a haunt of rogues. Till he died, he never had one word of repentance for the dirtiest possible life which he lived. As he lived in shame so he died in shame. A great drama—a tragedy—was enacted by the inner life of this young man and though he was in darkness about it, the world saw his case with horror.

I have read the case of a Lord, who used to live most decent life and had married a good woman of another aristocratic family and yet one day all of a sudden he disappeared,

After some years he was traced. The wife was informed of the most untidy, unclean and uncivilized life that her husband was leading in some far off village. She filed a suit for divorce and got warrants issued against his name to be brought in hand-cuffs in case he refused to accompany the bailiff. Her real intention was to bring him back to herself and not to divorce him. She thought that if he came back and lived a decent life with her, he would shed off the coils of savage and uncultured life. The Lord was brought by the bailiffs and the solicitor who accompanied them. The solicitor took him into a highly respectable restaurant and there he got him shaved and decently dressed. He provided him with the things he used to take when he was living the lordly life. He was brought to his wife. This good woman tried in every possible way to restore her husband to the normal condition. Apparently she seemed to have succeeded. But one day while she was sitting with her husband on a couch, she saw her husband suddenly getting restless. When she looked at the place which had drawn her husband's attention, she found that a half-clad, uncultured village girl stood peeping through the glass-door. She was amazed and shocked to find her husband jumping up and running towards the glass-door. With a very heavy blow he broke the glass and went out. At a short distance, she saw two horses standing. Her princely husband and that savage girl got over the horse backs and their horses flew like a shot. She had, perforce, to prosecute her suit for divorce in order to get free.

Here is the case of a person brought up in the most up-to-date, civilized and cultured life who relapsed to the primitive condition and was yet, unaware of the great tragedy enacted in his life. He had preferred a savage and semi-cultured half-clad girl to a very decent woman who was his wife. It is the unawareness of the fall which keeps a victim reconciled to his fallen condition. You can, therefore, see what havoc is brought by soul-darkness in the lives of human beings.

A STUDENT.—How is it, Sir, that while all others see the fall of the man, he himself is not aware of it ?

TEACHER.—You will understand it better if I give you an illustration. Some years ago, I had gone to my native place. When I was going towards the Dev Samaj Mandir, I

was attracted by a group of small children who were playing a game. There was one boy whose movements specially drew my attention. I felt that this boy, hardly aged seven years, was blind. I went towards the boy and found that he was actually so. But he was all the same playing very happily with the boys and his laughter was perhaps the loudest. I could not leave the place without finding out something more about the blind boy. I went to his parents whose house was just nearby and sympathetically enquired how the child had become blind. I can hardly describe the agony of the mother who in broken sobs described to me how by an attack of small-pox, the dear boy had lost his eyes. He was, then, only two years of age. The boy, therefore, was completely unaware of what he had lost. Even five years after the tragedy the mother was so broken-hearted that at the very mention of it, she burst into tears. His father also shed tears. While the parents were weeping and I too was deeply touched, the dear blind boy was having a hearty laugh with his playmates showing as if nothing serious had happened to his life. You can, therefore, see that blindness made that boy unaware of his blindness. Same is the case in the moral and spiritual worlds.

A STUDENT.—I can see, Sir, what is meant by physical and spiritual blindness.

TEACHER.—Moral blindness and spiritual blindness are greater curses than physical blindness. A physically blind man tries to adjust his life by means of other senses but the morally and spiritually blind man does not. He is insane. When he strikes somebody, he blames his victim and not himself. The result is that in the case of such a man, there is no cure of his misadjustments.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate this ?

TEACHER.—There was a highly educated man who broke his home. The reason for such a drastic step was very insignificant. The wife was asked by him not to stay in her parents' house a day beyond the time fixed. When the period was over, the parents insisted on her to stay for more time. Her only mistake was that she stayed away without taking further permission from her husband. The ego of the husband which seems to have been abnormal, was so deeply hurt that he

could never come into a mood of forgiving his wife. This poor woman was in exile from her husband's home and husband's heart for the best portion of her life. She had left her children as mere babes and it was when these children grew up to be young and mature that, through some intervention, the husband was reconciled. Both, however, had wasted their entire youth on such a triviality. For years together the husband remained blind to the tragedy that his lower force had enacted in his life. To exile a wife on such an insignificant reason means nothing but soul-darkness.

In my native place, during elections, a young son-in-law asked his father-in-law to vote for a man who was unworthy, or at least whom his father-in-law considered unworthy. The father-in-law did not vote as he wished. The result was that in his vanity, this young man sent his wife back to her father's home and never brought her back for years. I do not know if they were ever reconciled. I do not know if the poor girl at all lived after the shock. The whole world cried shame on the young man but he saw nothing wrong in his shameful conduct. He was morally and spiritually blind.

Similarly, I heard of a highly cultured couple who lived on the terms of extreme love and amity. They broke their ship of home life on the hidden rocks of vanity because, foolishly the wife crossed his will in one particular thing. The husband never realized that the ship of home life is too precious to be wrecked on the shoals of self and vanity. I am told that the wife had on her own part climbed down too much. She went into an attitude of begging for his forgiveness. But the offended vanity seemed to have robbed that young man of the spiritual eye much in the same way as the small-pox had robbed that dear child mentioned above, of his physical eyes.

A person who is blind as a soul, suffers the greatest tragedies of life. But the saddest part of it is that he is unaware of it.

A STUDENT.—Soul-blindness, Sir, is horrible in its nature if it can so summarily break into pieces such a precious thing as home.

TEACHER.—Soul-blindness suddenly destroys many a thing. A morally and spiritually blind soul is unaware of what he



loses and, therefore, he can lose the best and the dearest things.

In the history of early Christians, I read a very instructive story. Two young men, sons of the aristocracy—were studying with a young girl who was also a daughter of one of the highest officials of the state. Both these young men fell in love with her but this girl instinctively hated the one who was more brilliant and instinctively felt drawn towards the other, who though not so brilliant was at least a frank and an honest boy. She, therefore, married the latter. The former should have behaved like a sportsman. As a gentleman, he should have accepted the defeat in a gentlemanly spirit but he did not know that a serpent in the form of revenge was lurking in his dirty heart. This married couple was drawn towards Christianity. It was a most dangerous thing to be a Christian in those days. But this couple was converted by the beauty of Christ's life. The girl gradually converted her father also. After sometime there was a general order issued by the Government to arrest all Christians. This pair flew to a safe hiding place. Their friend—the disappointed lover—continued to command their respect and trust. They, therefore, informed him of their place of hiding. He paid his trusting friends by informing the police about their whereabouts. Both the husband and the wife were arrested. They came to know who had betrayed them. Their agony was acute. They suffered the penalty of death. But did that dark, cowardly, base friend ever see how he had sold his soul to the devil and proved faithless to those who deserved his highest faith? History does not give him any such credit. It is true that history of humanity has denounced the conduct of the man, but the blind and insane person was himself unaware of it.

Soul-darkness, therefore, is most dangerous. All the misery that we find in the world, all the sin and evil that we see all around, all the injustice, tyranny and acts of transgression that we come across, all treachery, faithlessness, all betrayal of the best trust that shocks our hearts are—all of them—due to several base character forces or feelings of man. It is these lower feelings of man which are responsible for all that is dark and wicked in life. We abhor the presence of these feelings in others, but it is amazingly true that we cherish these feelings in ourselves. We abhor them in others because we are able to

see the wickedness adversely affecting our lives. We are not able to abhor them in ourselves, because we are fascinated by the pleasure that they give us and which pleasure makes us so drunken that we are not able to see the pain we cause to others thereby. We are slaves of pleasures. If the darkest feelings give us pleasure, we love them. If any good feeling brings us pain, we hate it. The love of pleasure has applied bandages on our soul-eyes and, therefore, blind-folded we are taken to the scaffold of pleasure. We break our own homes ourselves, we destroy the good work done by others ourselves, we spread misery, we commit evils, but yet in our utter blindness all that concerns us is the pleasure that we get. Soul-blindness is wrought by love of pleasure.

## SOUL DEBILITY

A STUDENT.—What is meant by soul-darkness, Sir ?

TEACHER.—He is said to suffer from soul-darkness who does not possess the least desire to get knowledge about his self or soul, who is utterly blind to the incapacity (which he developes in his soul owing to the darkness produced by his several low-loves) of seeing and realizing the truths about his soul-life, his soul-diseases, his soul-degradation, his soul-evolution and his soul-dissolution, etc.

A STUDENT.—Can you, kindly illustrate this ?

TEACHER.—This is self-evident. It needs no illustrations. All over the world you will come across utter indifference of man to get knowledge about soul. In fact a desire to acquire knowledge about soul is almost absent in the world. From the time that man gets up early in the morning, to the time he retires for rest in the night, he seems busy in one or another way. But all his time and attention are occupied in the satisfaction of the desires he has developed in himself. These desires are too well-known. They are desires to get money, to get position, to get promotion, to get power, to get married, to get fame and name and to get various other bodily pleasures and in rare cases some mental pleasures. But in the programme of his life there is no time which he can spare for his soul-welfare. The result is that though thousands of books are being published every month all over the world, there is hardly any book published on the problem of true soul-knowledge. The whole world is busy in solving problems. The greatest leaders are busy in solving social, economic, political and administrative problems. Very rarely there are some who endeavour to solve some moral questions. But nowhere on the surface of the earth there is any attempt to get knowledge

about the soul-life and its various courses on the basis of the facts and laws of Nature. The most pathetic part of the whole affair is that either soul is considered as above and beyond the operation of the natural laws or it is considered as non-existent. As all such persons failed to find curatives for physical maladies who ignored Nature and resorted to magic or so-called super-naturalism; in the same way, if we consider soul, which is the product of Nature and subject to its laws for its life and death, as above and beyond Nature, we shall surely fail to get correct knowledge about soul. Hence even if some people may have a desire to get soul-knowledge, they will not be able to realize it unless they come to understand that the entire being of man, both his body and soul, is ceaselessly subject to the immutable laws of Nature.

A STUDENT.—How is soul, Sir, subject to the laws of Nature for its growth and decay ?

TEACHER.—If you realize certain fundamental facts you will be able to understand this fact very easily. The law of heredity, which is day by day coming into prominence, means nothing but that both the body and the mind of the child are the gifts of parents. As they inherit the entire body from their progenitors they inherit their soul also from their progenitors. This subject has been occupying the interest of the best minds and some of the best governments. The idea of marriage of parties without medical certificates and other qualifications is being discouraged. There are several telling instances of wicked persons who have been the ancestors of scores of wicked children. It is becoming now a settled conviction that a child must choose his parents, if he is to prosper in life. It means nothing but that the diseased and the wicked parents have no right to marry. In the case of the animal world, humanity has no doubt whatsoever, about the law of heredity. All over the civilized world, the breeding is caused among animals whose geneological tables reveal some splendid traits of heredity.

A STUDENT.—I have also, Sir, read recently an article on "Choose your parents." I never understood its importance before.

TEACHER.—Besides the law of heredity there is another great law of Nature which rules our life. This law is called the

law of environments. This law though clear to many a thinker has not acquired that prominence which it deserves. Many a promising life has been cut off at the very threshold of life, because of the poisonous environments. A son of a prostitute hardly realizes that prostitution is an odious matter. There was a boy in my class in a High School who was the son of a prostitute. He was a tall young man aged nineteen. I asked him if he had any feeling of uncomfortableness while living with his mother who was following that profession. Quite frankly he said, Sir, I find nothing wrong in this. What God has destined for my mother cannot be wrong. It is after all a profession and I don't think it is a bad profession." Such was the damaging influence on his character of the morally poisonous environments in which he lived. There is another illustration from the higher rungs of society which is also illustrative of the force of environments. There was a Hindu sage whose first wife was alive. It was well-known that he had practically cut off all worldly ties and devoted himself to the work of social reformation. At the age of nearly sixty, he surprised the world by entering into a wedlock with a grown up girl who was one of his workers in the cause of the social reformation. The news of his second marriage during the lifetime of his first wife shocked the Hindu public. But some of the Muslim journals marvelled at the stupidity of the Hindus who raised hue and cry on what they felt as an innocent matter. Being brought up in a polygamous atmosphere the Muslim journalists saw nothing wrong in polygamy. Such is the devastating influence of social and creedal environments.

Once I went to a European in connection with my mission. His wife—a quite sympathetic woman—read the eight specified sins which every member of the Dev Samaj has to renounce. When she read among those sins the sin of flesh-eating she asked in the tone of surprise, "Do you consider flesh-eating to be a sin?" I said, "Yes." After a while she said, "But God Almighty has sanctioned the sacrifice of lamb etc." She was a good and kind woman but in the environments in which she lived she found nothing wrong in taking flesh.

Again, you all know that in our hostel, we do not permit flesh-eating. We consider it a wrong practice. One day a great Muslim friend of mine, while talking on this prohibition, said,

"Dear friend, how can any such thing be unlawful which the God Almighty has ordained as lawful?" I don't discuss with my friends. I dropped the matter there. But in the environments in which my friend lived flesh-eating was a very innocent affair.

But as against this, I give you another instance of the change of environments which produce the change of practice. A Muslim Pathan began to associate with our people. After breathing in the environments of our society, he was so far changed that though once a confirmed hunter, he could not bear the sight of any innocent bird or an animal being harmed by hunters. He confessed to me that it was not possible for him to take flesh as he felt animals to be really his near and dear friends. Such is the magic of environments.

Only lately I read about some of the desperate criminals having been taken to Andamans not in the jail but in the settlement and being placed in charge of a good society there. After a few years, the report says that there was not a single criminal in that tribe. In the changed and healthy environments, all of them had given up criminal habits and settled down to a life of normal, healthy, peace-loving citizens.

Once we believe in the law of heredity and the law of environments as the sole arbiters of the destiny of man, there is no further argument needed to assure us that both the soul and the body of man are subject to the immutable laws of Nature; and that the knowledge of soul constitutes not only the knowledge of the nature of soul but also of all such laws of Nature as govern the betterment or degradation of soul, its freedom from degradation and its higher and progressive evolution in soul-life.

Those who deny that soul of man is the product of Nature, much in the same way as his body is the product of Nature, cannot be presumed to have desire for the true knowledge of soul though they may have desire enough for knowing what the soul is from the metaphysical point of view.

**A STUDENT.**—By true knowledge, Sir, you mean the knowledge of the facts and laws of Nature.

**TEACHER.**—Decidedly yes. By true knowledge, I mean the knowledge of the facts and laws of Nature. I do not understand true knowledge in any other sense. This true knowledge can be

put to scientific test and logical reasoning. Both experiment and logical reasoning will afford the proof of this kind of knowledge. In fact I consider that no such knowledge is worth having which cannot stand experiment and valid logical reasoning.

Besides the absence of desire for true soul-knowledge there is another true factor by which we can prove that man is groping in soul-darkness. When a man loses his moral and spiritual vitality and is unaware of its cause, he cannot but be blind or ignorant. When a child who is daily losing in weight and is getting thinner day by day does not realize the danger to his life, you cannot but call him an ignorant child. Even there are some grown up people who display this kind of ignorance. There was a man aged about sixty-two whom I found very much reduced. Naturally I was shocked to see his weakness. I just asked him in a casual way if he was all right. The reply that he gave me was a significant one. He said, "Why do you ask me this question? I have never been better in health in all the past over sixty years." I was surprised to hear him say so but I kept silent. It is sad that in the next two months he was no more. When such grown up men are so blind even to the fact of their growing weakness of body, what can we expect of them in the soul-world?

When a man sees the menace to his life in following a certain habit and is not able to shake off that habit, does he realize that he is getting into a moral bankruptcy?

There was a young man who was married. His wife suffered from a serious contagious disease. As he was a young man, the doctors advised that he should be kept aloof from his wife. They plainly told him that any relation with his wife would be a decree of death for him. He showed perceptible fear. For sometime he kept himself aloof. But he failed. His failure not only hastened the death of his wife but made him a victim, in his own turn, to the same disease. Did he realize that his slavery to lust had produced in him, incapacity not only to see this horror but to save himself from death.

There was a graduate who was suffering from T.B. He was apparently cured but the doctors told him definitely that for some years he ought to become very careful. They impressed upon him the need of *Brahmcharya*. He was all right for two years. He did not marry for these two years. But he

had an offer and he could not resist. His friends warned him. But he did not heed the words. He married. His marriage hastened his death and within the next four months he was no more.

There is a young stalwart Police Officer whose greatest weakness is love for palate. Several times he has been brought to the brink of death. Whenever he is cured the doctors advise him to be very temperate in his food. But he is utterly helpless. Whenever delicious things are prepared for him in his tour, he over-eats. The result is that he immediately falls ill. Since his body is very robust it has so far been with-standing these onslaughts. But this Police Officer is neither aware of the horror of slavery to palate, nor is he capable of saving himself from the sure death which his repeated intemperance threatens to bring.

In the same way, love of praise makes a man slave to the opinion of his community. This slavery morally weakens him. But he is not aware of his growing moral weakness. I saw a brilliant M.A. and a social reformer vehemently protesting against the custom of early marriage. But this zealous reformer did not realize that his slavery to his wife and his community had morally weakened him. Owing to that slavery he had to get his own girl married at an early age. He may have, at times, perhaps, felt the pain that he had proved untrue to his cause but he never realized nor could realize his slavery to public opinion as something dangerous.

From these instances and many more we can gather the fact that those who are slaves to various kinds of happiness-giving lower desires are in the first place so much drunken with happiness that they can never think of true knowledge about their soul. Besides this, they are unaware of their growing moral and spiritual degradation and their growing incapacity to see and realize truths of soul-life. As a man who is intoxicated by an over-dose of liquor loses all count of himself, in the same way, all souls who are drunken with the gratification which various happiness-giving lower desires give to them, lose all count of their soul-welfare.

A STUDENT.—How can this soul-darkness be removed ?

TEACHER.—This darkness is removed by a corresponding light. If a man is so fortunate that he happens to breathe in



an atmosphere where soul-light is available, he will receive it in its brilliance. He will see the horror of soul-darkness and the beauty of soul-knowledge. Besides this, this light will enable him to see his inner fine part, the soul. He will see its nature, he will see the horror of the slavery to lower desires. He will feel an urge to get out of them. He will see the beauty of higher feelings. He will feel an urge to possess them. By means of this unique light, the forgotten world of soul would become the reality with him, the hitherto dreamt of privilege of freedom from slavery to lower desires, would turn into an actuality with him. Besides this, the life of higher feelings would become an object of real and earnest gain. This light, in fact, will make his soul more real to him than his body. He will realize the higher moral and spiritual life as within his reach. He would, in fact, feel himself a new man.

A STUDENT.—Have you got experience of this light, Sir ?

TEACHER.—Yes, I have and so have hundreds in my own society. We people feel that if there is any object worth pursuit, any goal more real than any other, it is one of soul-knowledge and the higher evolution of soul-life. We feel so in the splendour of that light. That feeling is possible only in that light. I know that there have been persons who got this light and changed the entire course of their lives but who lapsed into the old dark and degraded life once they were cut off from this light. It is the constant living in this light which is urgently needed to keep us in the soul-world and make us seekers after true soul-knowledge and true higher life.

## METHODOLOGY OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE

A STUDENT.—Is there anything more, that you can tell us on the problem of getting true knowledge ?

TEACHER.—Yes. I want to speak to you about the essential need of the methods to be employed in getting true knowledge. The one element of this method is that whatever can be tested by experiment should not be left to imagination or fancy or belief or opinion. Suppose we want to know what is the weight of a particular boy, what is the safest and the only reliable method ?

A STUDENT.—The best and exact method would be to weigh him by a weighing-machine, as is being done in our college.

TEACHER.—This is true. Again, if you are to find out the temperature of any one, would you depend on imagination, belief or opinion ? What is the best and safest method ?

A STUDENT.—We can examine him by a thermometer.

TEACHER.—True. Again, suppose you want to purchase a maund of wheat, how would you be certain that it is a maund ?

A STUDENT.—We can weigh it by the weighing-machine or by the balance and the fixed measures.

TEACHER.—True. This is why you find on big railway stations a weighing-machine by which the luggage of the passengers is weighed. Again, suppose somebody tells you that he knows English and is able to teach the B.A. students what is the safest method to be sure about his knowledge ?

A STUDENT.—The best and safest method is to ask him to teach the B.A. classes. If he is able to teach them, all controversy would cease, but not otherwise.

TEACHER.—How do we know about the character of a man as to whether it is good or bad ?

A STUDENT.—It is easy, Sir, to know about him by his

behaviour and actions. A man is said to be honest when in dealing with men he is fair and just. That firm of businessmen is considered reliable which has proved by actions, i.e., by a test, that it deals fairly and justly and is above board with the depositors or customers.

TEACHER.—True. We shall cease to deal with an individual or a firm when we find their behaviour or dealings not above board. This is based upon experience which is a near approach to experiment. But experiment here too, is of immense use.

There was a millionaire in the southern part of India. I read a story about him. A *Sadhu*, who was the priest of a great temple and had inherited most precious stones, as legacy of the temple god had great faith in that millionaire. He wanted to go on a long pilgrimage. He considered the millionaire to be a trustworthy man. He deposited his treasure with him. This *Sadhu* was absent for some years. And the millionaire had in the meantime opened the treasure, realized the fabulous value they would fetch in bazar and had therefore fallen under the temptation. Long absence of the *Sadhu* assured him by his wishful thought that the *Sadhu* was dead and therefore he, the millionaire, was the rightful owner. The *Sadhu* returned after some years and demanded the treasure of his temple which he had deposited with him. The millionaire absolutely denied its receipt. Here is a case of an experiment and not an experience only. The millionaire failed by the experiment. He, therefore, stood arraigned before the bar of Nature, as a fallen man.

There was a great political leader in Europe who was believed to be a woman-hater or at least not a woman's man. People, therefore, trusted him implicitly as a chaste man. Once warrants were issued for his arrest by the Government on the charge of sedition. One of his great followers concealed him in his house. The wife of the host had to look after his needs. The propinquity of this great leader and the host's wife was a test to prove their virtue. Both failed. The matter went to court. They were proved to have fallen. This is how an experiment brought out and measured the true worth of this great political leader.

There was a great social reformer who had fought all his life in defence of widow re-marriage. He was believed to be an apostle of the cause of widow re-marriage. As the circumstances shall have it, his wife died. He was then required by the band

of his followers to set an example by marrying a widow. He failed. This is how actual experiment showed the hollowness of his love for that reform.

Experiment, therefore, is the unfailing method to get true knowledge.

A STUDENT.—Is this method to be applied to all our beliefs, opinions and ideas?

TEACHER.—Surely, yes. The followers of Swami Dayanand are never weary of telling us how their Swami gave up belief in idols. They say that when he saw that the idol of Shiva was not able to protect himself from the rats which ran over it and stole the offerings placed before the idol by the devotees, he argued, how could such a being protect the whole universe. This was an appeal to experiment and logic.

A STUDENT.—Is there any other example, Sir, of an appeal to experiment in belief?

TEACHER.—In our community it was a belief that the tonsure ceremony of a child should always be performed at a particular place at a particular village. My own tonsure ceremony was also performed in that village which lay at the distance of nearly fifty miles from my birth-place. Our people believe that no male child would survive if its tonsure ceremony was not performed there. When I grew up and became a father in my turn, I saw that the belief was untenable. I performed the tonsure or first shaving of hair of my first born son at home and without calling a gathering of our community men. It is simply a matter of first shaving of the hair on the head of the child. It does not need all fuss and ceremony and a visit to a distant place to have it done in the temple of a goddess. As soon as my relations came to know that I had defied everything, they grew nervous and said that my child would suffer. I had no such fears. All my sons have grown up though their tonsure ceremonies have never been performed in the temple in that particular village or in any other temple.

A STUDENT.—This was a good experiment, Sir.

TEACHER.—In one sub-section in my community, a custom prevailed of having the tonsure ceremony at the shrine of *Satis* (virgins) where a goat was slaughtered and the corpse of the goat was put in a bag and then offered to the river. One of my neighbours realized the absurdity of killing a goat. He had

a son whom he loved very much. The son's tonsure ceremony was to take place. He refused to slaughter a goat and give it as an offering to the river. His caste-men believed that the child would not survive. The child did survive and he has grown up into a father of several children. Thus an experiment showed the absurdity of animal sacrifice. His good example was followed by many.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, it is only brave spirits who can put their belief to the test of an experiment.

TEACHER.—Indeed, it requires courage of conviction to stand against a popular and hoary belief.

In our country it was a belief that a woman who put off nose-ring, would become a widow. Ordinarily the widows were not permitted to put on nose-rings in certain parts. Some educated persons saw the absurdity of this. They asked their wives to put off their nose-rings. I was one of them. The weak people thought this violation of popular belief would make us suffer. We did not suffer. The example became infectious and to-day there are thousands of married women who do not put on nose-rings.

But weak people though convinced about the stupidity of a thing follow it just to appease the popular wish. I know of a neighbour who was in service in a very advanced capital town. There the educated women never put on nose-rings. His wife followed the good practice. But whenever she returned to her native place, she put on the nose-ring at some near station before arriving home.

A STUDENT.—This is a sort of hypocrisy, Sir.

TEACHER.—Such hypocrites abound in the world. There are persons who have no faith in any religion and yet outwardly they make a confession of faith in it in public. But let me revert to the subject.

There was a young man, whose memory is being cherished by thousands of the countrymen, who had no belief in the potency of tombs or *Samadhis* or shrines in blessing or cursing a man. Some of his chums asked him to put his views to test. He agreed. They took him to a grave-yard and pointing at a tomb they told him, "You go and strike your fist against the tomb. You will realize the potency of a tomb." He did so and did something else which they wanted of him. As was to be

expected, he did not suffer. He was free from the fear complex and he had come to realize that the dead who were buried under the tomb were after all dead bodies. He had seen also old tombs which had been neglected and which had by the ravages of time so much crumbled that the interior was open and hardly there were a few bones left. His experiment liberated many of his friends.

A STUDENT.—But there are shrines of *sadhus* and *pirs* where people congregate to get their desires realized.

TEACHER.—I know of these beliefs. Besides this there are thousands of other beliefs which humanity cherishes. The existence of such beliefs is not an unknown thing to me. My point is that those who want to know whether their beliefs are correct or not, have the one unfailing test and that test is the scientific method of experiment.

A STUDENT.—Sir, by applying this method, are we not committing something wrong? Where faith is essential experiment is tabooed.

TEACHER.—I have never seen the soundness of it. Throughout my life, I found experiment as the only weapon of testing my beliefs and I know that experiment has never failed me. But experiment is to be applied when the subject to be tested admits of experiment.

You all know that I have no belief in any kind of supernaturalism. Before I was a graduate, I had changed my beliefs. One of my dearest cousins who felt for me one day met me on the way (and that place is still fresh in my memory) when he asked me if it was true that I had ceased to believe in supernaturalism. I said, "Yes." This cousin of mine out of deep sympathy for me said, "Dear brother, do you know that by renouncing your faith in *Ishwara* you will incur His displeasure. I tell you, you will never be able to pass your B.A. examination." I told him, "Brother, I thank you for your concern for me. But if I have to quench my thirst and I drink water, my thirst is bound to be quenched whether I believe or not in supernaturalism. In the same way, if I am hungry and I take food, my hunger is bound to be satisfied whatever may be my beliefs. In the same way, if I possess normal intelligence as I do and work hard as I am doing, I shall pass whatever may be my beliefs. Beliefs never count if we fulfil a law. In order to

gain knowledge, besides intelligence we must work hard. This law is applicable to all men all over the world. This law is independent of all beliefs. This is why Hindus pass though they do not believe in Islam or Christianity, Muslims pass even though they do not believe in Hinduism or Christianity, and children of Positivists, Secularists, Agnostics, etc., pass several degree examinations. This is so because they fulfil a universal law of being diligent and normally intelligent students."

A STUDENT.—Is experiment, Sir, necessary in acquiring true knowledge ?

TEACHER.—I told you that whatever can admit of experiment must be proved by experiment. A wrestler must prove by the experiment of wrestling that he is a great wrestler. An educated man must prove by actual test that he is really educated. His claim or even his diplomas would not be a sure test. Every virtue that anybody claims to possess, every power that anybody claims to have, has to be tested. Otherwise you will never be on sound basis.

A STUDENT.—How can we apply experiment to our belief that our religion is the best ?

TEACHER.—A school or college proves its claim to be the best by its results. All the trees prove their efficacy by means of their fruits. A good horse proves its claim to be good by giving a ride to a rider and passing through a test. A certain breed of cows is called good because of the milk that they give. A special breed of dogs is proved to be good by the courage and loyalty they display in the service of their masters. In the same way, a family is called a decent family according as it produces decent people. A nation is called a great nation according to the great number of selfless workers it produces. A religious system is called good and efficient according as it produces among its votaries more and more of such persons who are least harmful and most serviceable. In fact, as the taste of the pudding is in the eating, so the test of a religious system lies in producing persons who are least fanatic and most tolerant persons, least inclined to transgress on the rights and comforts of others and most inclined to help and serve others, least selfish and most unselfish, and to a great extent free from the most demonic feelings of jealousy, of revenge, of *jehad*, of loot, of murder even in the interest of the so-called religion.

This is the true test of a religious system. The number and the worldly prosperity of the followers of a religion can never be the test of its being good. Higher character alone is the test of a religion. Any religious system which fails to elevate the moral tone of its votaries and fails to develop in them altruistic feelings, is pronounced by the facts and laws of Nature or by the reality of events, as unworthy of being called a religious system, much in the same way as a school or a college does not deserve to be called a school or a college when it fails to turn out educated and literate persons. This is the direct method of investigation which can prove the efficacy of a true religious system.

A STUDENT.—If higher character or altruistic life is laid down as the test of the efficacy of a true religion, does it not amount to expecting the millennium ?

TEACHER.—A great thiest and political leader, once wrote:—

“Personally I have grown to believe that until and unless some iconoclast appears on the earth and destroys all forms of religion and substitute in their place one universal religion for all, which means character in other words, there is no hope of redemption for the religion-ridden world.”

He considers universal religion to be only that which produces men of high character. He also complains that this function of universal religion is not being performed. Hence he is disgusted with them. If by religion we mean higher character or noble life, we have got an unfailing test to sift true religion from a false one.



## LOGICAL REASONING

A STUDENT.—Is there any other condition besides experiment which is to be observed before we can accept a belief to be true knowledge ?

TEACHER.—Yes, there is and it consists in possessing attraction or love for logical reasoning or principles of correct thought.

Suppose a man gets down at the railway station of our town and meets with a ticket-collector who is dishonest, a cooly who is dishonest and a tongawala who is dishonest; and he jumps to the conclusion that people of this town are all dishonest. This is an illogical way of thinking.

A STUDENT.—Would he not be justified in his conclusion ?

TEACHER.—No, he would not. To draw a universal conclusion on the observation of a few solitary instances is landing in fallacy. In every town there are good men and bad men, honest persons and dishonest persons. To condemn the whole town on the basis of an experience of a few persons is illogical.

A STUDENT.—But we often do that.

TEACHER.—Yes, this is being often done. But false conclusions lead to dangerous consequences.

Once I went to Bombay with a friend. We saw a *Bhaya* in charge of a good Dharamasala. He asked us, "Whence do you come ?" My friend answered, "We come from Punjab." The *Bhaya* forthwith said, "Sorry, I regret no room is available." We felt depressed and began to talk in our own provincial language. The *Bhaya* heard us and said, "But you seem to belong to Sindh!" We said, "Yes." Then the attitude of the *Bhaya* changed. "Bring your luggage," he said, "there are some rooms vacant on the second floor." We were amazed by his change of attitude. We said, "Why did you refuse us accommodation in the first instance ?" He said, "Please

pardon me for that. Our experience of some Punjabees is very bitter. They would refuse to vacate a room after the fixed time is over. Once we had to call the Police." Then my friend told him that he had no reason to condemn all Punjabees on the basis of the experience of a few undesirable persons. He was silent.

You see how the hasty judgement was going to lead the *Bhaya* to do injustice to us.

But I agree with you that this tendency to pass hasty judgment is the bane of mankind. This leads to misunderstandings, injustices and even crimes.

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly illustrate these points ?

TEACHER.—Once a doctor friend of mine took me along with him when he went to see a patient. A respectable lady present there in the patient's house consulted the doctor about her husband. She said that her husband's faith in womankind has been so far shattered because of his experience with some woman that he had made a hell of her life. She said he did not trust her out of his presence. He had given up his job to be near her for all the twenty-four hours. When she was standing somewhere with her neighbour, he would not bear that and call her at once. When she was sitting on a cot, he would suspect the presence of some man thereunder and try to feel that by a big stick.

The doctor called the husband. He tried to appeal to his reason that because some women were bad it never followed that all were bad. But he was utterly deaf to all appeals to reason.

A STUDENT.—What a hell it created by feasting on a false judgment ?

TEACHER.—When true knowledge is a blessing, what is antagonistic to it must be bad. To say that because some Indians are liars therefore all Indians are liars, is a most mischievous conclusion. To say that because a man is idol-worshipper, therefore, he is worse in character than a unitarian is illogical. It has led to gravest injustice. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya is an idol-worshipper, and yet he is head and shoulders above crores of unitarians in nobility of life, spirit of sacrifice and sweetness of temper.

When I see hatred being shown for idol-worshippers, I

feel the danger of illogical attitude. I am myself neither a believer in supernatural beings nor the idols. But because a man believes in idols, therefore, he deserves to be hated and persecuted is a line of argument which has never appealed to me. It is illogical much in the same way as it is illogical to hate a Muslim because he is a Muslim, to hate a Christian because he is a Christian, to hate a Buddhist because he is a Buddhist, to hate an atheist because he is an atheist. This illogical attitude is the source and mother of all fanaticism and all quarrels. It was this bitter phase of illogical attitude of several sects which led Mr. V.S. Mudlikar to write in *The Bombay Sentinel* of the 9th August 1938 :—

“Whatever the object—and it must have been a good one, though perhaps by simplicity of understanding—of the different religions of the world, there is not the least doubt that the net effect of the several religions has been to create strife between the different groups and increase misery all around.”

A STUDENT.—I believe, Sir, that it is illogical to condemn any race or class of people on the basis of beliefs.

TEACHER.—It is also illogical to believe that because some ancestors had done something wrong therefore all their generations should share their blame. It is because of this illogical reasoning that generations of Jews have been persecuted with fiendish zeal because some Jews crucified Christ.

It is again, illogical to condemn a whole race on the basis of colour. The white races have been guilty of this illogical reasoning and hence they have been guilty of great crime against coloured people.

It is again illogical to believe that because a man is an atheist, therefore he cannot be good. This illogical attitude has led many a theist all over the world to persecute atheists. Some theists have raised a voice of protest against this illogical attitude of their co-religionists, but the majority shares the sin of this wrong attitude.

It is again, an illogical attitude to believe that because several heads of theological churches have often sided with the capitalists, therefore all theologians are bad. It is illogical reasoning to condemn belief in theology and violently put down their worship.

It is an illogical attitude to believe that because woman has

upto now been inferior to man, therefore she is inherently inferior and should be consequently suppressed and repressed. This wrong attitude has led men and religions to do greatest injustice to woman.

It is an illogical attitude to believe that a girl-child is an unwelcome being because she is a girl and therefore a burden on the family, when in fact now that the girls have come to their own, many of them are turning out to be the greatest supporters of parents.

It is an illogical attitude that because certain practices are sanctioned by religious books, therefore they are good. This has led to several acts of injustice.

A STUDENT.—Sir, I did not know that so many of our acts which are called wrong are due to illogical attitude. Should we then, Sir, follow the lead of reason ?

TEACHER.—I am talking of logic and not reason. Logic controlled by the love of facts and laws of Nature serves as a safe guide.

## FAITH IS IMPERATIVE

A STUDENT.—Please, explain how it is impossible for man to live his life without faith in another man.

TEACHER.—Just see, millions of children who go to school accept as true many things which their teachers tell them or which are recorded in the books prescribed for their studies. They believe as true that the earth on which we live is round, that it rotates on its axis, that it revolves round the sun, that its circumference is so many thousands of miles. They do for instance, believe that a particular town, city or country is situated on the bank of such and such a river or the coast of such and such a sea. They, for instance, believe that a particular King or Raja was born or he died or he ascended the throne in a particular year or this or that particular King was a perfect despot or that a particular King had killed his own brothers and imprisoned his own father in order to ascend the throne he had no legal right to occupy. Even the teachers accept them as true because they also similarly learnt from their teachers and believed in them.

A STUDENT.—Sir, do you think all that is written in our books is true or all that teachers teach us is true.

TEACHER.—The question of truth or falsity cannot and does not arise in a child mind. As a child mind takes as food whatever his parents give him, so he takes in what elders or teachers teach him. Just as sometimes children suffer heavily because of taking wrong food offered by their guardians or elders or others so also sometimes children suffer heavily because of wrong ideas, practices, beliefs or modes of life etc., they assimilate from others.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate it ?

TEACHER.—I was once sitting in the office of a great legal

luminary. I was introduced to a great dacoit. The distinguished lawyer said, "Here is that famous dacoit about whom you must have heard so much. He is now grown old. His grand son has been recently arrested. The entire community has been perturbed by this mishap. Indeed, the boy is the pride of his people." I was amazed at so much appreciation shown for a dacoit. The boy dacoit himself had accepted as meritorious the life of a criminal. The father was not able to understand anything said against him or his son's life. He felt crime to be a profession and the best one because it involved risk. This is how wrong practices impressed in childhood are accepted on faith and lived.

A client had come to engage me. A friend of mine had brought him to me. He was a big landlord and a young man. There were many things said in his praise. One thing that particularly drew my attention was that the young landlord (and he was a Muslim) had a wife or had kept a concubine in every important place of his work. The landlord felt proud of this. I said, "Are you not content with one wife?" His attendant said, "Sir, is he a *Bania* that he should have one wife? He is a *Sardar*. Almost all *Sardars* have more than two wives and some concubines. His father had a seraglio." I said all that was wrong. But all of them said "Sir, what is wrong in this? A man has a right to have as many women as he can maintain." These practices the young landlord and his people had accepted on faith.

Hence on faith, we accept facts. On faith we accept fictions. On faith we accept moral values. On faith we accept evil as right. For millions who rarely think, such a state of things follows them upto the grave.

A STUDENT.—I follow your point, Sir. But, please, deepen this truth on us as to how it is inherent in us to put faith in another person.

TEACHER.—Thousands of people take food prepared and served to them by their mothers, wives, sisters or servants because they believe that none of them must have mixed poison in the served dishes. There are numbers of hotels, restaurants, cafes or inns existing all over the world where millions are served food or tea or tiffins everyday. These millions of visitors take what is served to them on the faith

that no posion is mixed with their food or drink. Then there are so many shops open to sell sweets, preserved food, pickles and millions of persons purchase these delicious things and take them with food or otherwise. Why is it so ? Because the vendees have faith in the vendors. On this faith are based relations of a client with a lawyer, a patient with a doctor, a broker and a dealer etc.

A STUDENT.—I wonder why my attention was not drawn to this most patent thing. Life would be impossible without faith. All relations cease to function if faith is not maintained or placed.

TEACHER.—True ! Besides this, how can domestic peace and trust exist were it not for faith ? It is faith which makes wedlock stable, married life, one of sweet concord and love, a covetable thing. This is so inspite of the fact that certain lapses do take place. Faith makes life possible.

A STUDENT.—Faith, Sir is then a most valuable thing. Please illustrate it more fully how faith is essential for our progress.

TEACHER.—By faith in Jesus Christ, Paul became St. Paul. By faith in Buddha, Anand became the most venerable and revered Ananda. By faith, Abu Baker and Umar became the great ones in Islam. By faith in Guru Nanak, Bhai Lehna became Guru Angad Dev. By faith in a certain Sufi, a fallen woman left her fallen ways and became ultimately the object of respect and even reverence to thousands. By faith, Kanwar became the Saint Sinder Bhakar Kanwar Ram, an object of reverence to lacs of Hindus in Sindh. By faith in Socrates, Plato became the towering philosopher. Whenever faith has been placed in a person whom one believes to be a higher one, a regular assimilation of his greatness takes place and a disciple becomes an object of devotion to many.

A STUDENT.—It is then right, Sir, that faith moves mountains.

TEACHER.—It is true, faith infuses great energy and masterfulness in a person. If the faith is a right one, it showers wonderful blessings on the possessors and the world.

A STUDENT.—What is meant by right faith ?

TEACHER.—Right faith is always faith in what is true in

life and what is good in life. Such a faith is a life-promoting faith.

A STUDENT.—Please explain this.

TEACHER.—In order to have such a faith, one should have to start with faith in the ultimate victory of truth and goodness. If he has no faith that truth shall triumph in the end and goodness shall prevail in the end, why would he have faith in what is true and what is good. No person builds his life on defeat. Everybody builds his life on victory. Defeatist philosophy or mentality hardly helps.

It is the religious duty of every man to stand firm like a rock by truth and goodness so that faith of those who trust in us may be strengthened. Those who prefer evil to good and falsehood to untruth do this great dis-service that they mangle faith of others in such noble things. A mother of a grown up son and a daughter left her most loyal husband for a man for whom she happened to develop fancy called love. She sacrificed loyalty to her long wedded good husband for this fancy. She left her husband and children and married the object of her fancy. After a year or so, she hungered for her children. She wrote a letter to her daughter and son requesting that they may write to her. Her son wrote like this: *"It is faith that you have mangled, for Dad, for me, for my sister and for my wife—that all important and necessary faith in love and in life. For always we will doubt, will entertain a sly fear—fear of putting too much trust in love, in the goodness of life . . . ."*

What a pathetic letter and what an eye-opener. It is a duty of us all, whether we are young or old, men or women, educated or uneducated, high or low, to stand by goodness and truth. Otherwise we shall mangle faith of others in goodness. As faith is the foundation of life, we shall be shaking the foundations if we prove traitors to goodness and truth. What a duty on us, what a responsibility on us, what a commandment on us to stand loyal upto death by what is decent in life, what is noble in life, what is best in life! *May we realize this most precious fact !*



## FAITH—RIGHT AND WRONG

A STUDENT.—Would you kindly give us a talk on what is wrong faith ?

TEACHER.—Man is born helpless and ignorant of the world. He gradually grows in body and mind. He has no knowledge of his environments. He has to accept beliefs about it on faith. We find that the first words he uses and the first language that he speaks is of his parents or immediate guardians. He accepts words on faith without knowing their etymology. He speaks language without knowing why particular words stand for particular things. Taking advantage of this helpless and ignorant stage of child's life some elderly boys play certain practical jokes on them. I know of a child who was sitting in a shop. A gentleman came there. The boy greeted him. He said, "How are you, Sir ? Are you all right ? Are your children—all of them hale and hearty ?" The guest was happy to see the boy so decently trained. But soon afterwards the boy said, "How would you like to relish flesh of a rat or a cat ? Should I bring it for you ?" The guest felt confused. But after a time, the fact dawned on him that the poor child seemed to have been played upon. He, however, spared the child the rebuke he may have deserved in other circumstances. There was another similar case of a child who accepted teaching from another which was positively wrong, but he had no knowledge. He was repeating a lesson in his verandah. But he was taught to pronounce *cat* as 'dog'. While giving its meaning he was taught to say that it meant rat. Somebody heard this. He said to the boy, "What are you doing ? *C-a-t* is pronounced as cat and not *dog*. It means बिल्ली or cat and not rat or चूहा." He tried to correct him. But the dear child did not and could not know why *c-a-t* is cat and not dog. We as ignorant children

accept on faith as we by ourselves are not able to get knowledge of it. I myself had bitter experience of this child's faith once. I wanted to purchase some sugar drops. A grown-up child told me that I shall get sugar drops if I tell a particular shopkeeper to give me '*kul maro*'. This word when translated in English means: "May you all die." This was a positive curse. I was bound to hurt the feelings of the shopkeeper. It hurt him and he gave a terrible slap on my face. I wept. I had given him one pice. He returned it to me. I was returning weeping when some kind soul interested in me asked me why I was weeping. I gave him the whole story. He said, "Dear boy, you were misled by some mischievous child. In fact that poor shopkeeper is being teased with the word '*kul maro*'. When he goes to his house, some mischievous boys use that word and run away. This is why he slapped your dear face. He should not have done so. Come, I give you my love."

I have given you these few instances to show you to what extent we go in our faith. This is imperative. Hence those children are fortunate whose lot is thrown among the highly cultured and enlightened families. A child cannot but put faith. This proves most blessed in that case. He quickly assimilates knowledge which has taken his ancestors centuries to acquire. Faith is a great blessing if well-placed. It is a great curse if ill-placed.

A STUDENT.—According to you then, Sir, faith is imperative. It is not possible to do without faith. Only it should be well-placed, otherwise it proves a curse. Would you explain this ?

TEACHER.—There is an elderly man, aged about fifty. As a child he was sent to a good school. In that school, the teacher used to teach students that abusing another was a bad habit. The child accepted on faith this injunction of his teacher and followed it. One day a new teacher came to the class. He did not know the traditions of the school. He was given to abusing others. He used a foul word. At once this child got up and said, "Sir, you are abusing. It is bad." The teacher felt ashamed. The teacher himself used to repeat this story to show how a child brought up in good environments reforms his teachers. Only recently, I returned from a place where a good father was lamenting the dearth of schools in his place where children

may be taught good manners. He said even girls learn to use abusive language in schools. The children do not realize what they are uttering. They merely echo their environments. They say what they have accepted on faith. Once I was going to a station on foot when I heard cries. I turned and saw a grown up Muslim boy holding his younger brother in an embrace trying to console him. Their father had died. I was shocked to hear the elderly boy using word (he supposed it to be an endearing term) in relation to his brother which was a direct abuse to his sister. Similarly, I have heard grown up women of low families using abusive words towards each other which are shocking. When I was myself a child, I used to ask them why they used shocking abuses. They used to say in all innocence, "What is wrong, we use them out of affection". All these children or grown-up people accepted even wrong things as innocent, simply on faith. Hence I say that when it is a fact that we grow from childhood into manhood on faith, accepting many things unchallenged, how necessary it is to be brought up in enlightened and moral atmosphere.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate this point still further ?

TEACHER.—For the last over twenty-one years I have been a teacher of college students. It is a super-human task to help the students to understand that man has descended from animals. It is a problem to make them understand that animals existed ages before man appeared on this planet, that for hundreds of thousands of years man lived like an animal and his civilization is of only recent growth. It is a himalayan problem to make them see that language is not a gift of gods but a fruit of the struggles of man for ages and that all knowledge is the fruit of human labour and not a ready-made dish served to human beings from on high. Children of enlightened races find no such difficulty. They breathe in the atmosphere where such a knowledge can be had without a struggle and on faith. When parents and elders are enlightened in these problems, they communicate knowledge to their children who readily accept them on faith. I find children in the modern schools readily accepting such truth as "earth is round"; "it rotates on its axis"; "it revolves round the sun"; "the earth is a mere speck of dust compared to the universe"; "sky is not a roof but a void—a

limit of our vision", "Sun is at the distance of nine crores of miles from earth." "As compared to the sun, the earth is like a grain of gram on a jar" etc. etc. But their ancestors could not accept these facts. Even now those who have not been educated in modern schools or not brought up in an enlightened home find it too hard to accept them.

A STUDENT.—I see your point, Sir. Even after listening to your discourses on evolution and the decent of man from the ape line of the mammalian type and even after reading proofs—embryological, geological and biological—it is hard for us to believe that we are not created but that we have evolved. We boys begin to say, "How foolish it is to accept this that we have descended from animals! How good it is to believe that a super-natural being created us!"

TEACHER.—We have to accept truth not because it is sugar coated but because it is truth. A child born of poor parents, feels ashamed when he rises to an eminence. In fact, his glory consists in this that he has risen high from the lowest rung of the ladder and not in calling himself son of a king. There is no glory in being born high. There is glory in having grown high. Once a girl became rude to her father because he was an agriculturist and cultivator. His daughter had been given good education by him. She learnt to dress decently and even fashionably. She was utterly dependent on her father. And yet because her father was poorly dressed, she felt ashamed to acknowledge him as her father. How foolish and cruel. Man is doing the same. The immediate ancestors of humanity are animals. Man's glory consists not in having been created but in having *evolved* from animal stage to the present developed mould. However, that is by the way. The main point is this that as human child is born ignorant he has to grow into knowledge by the help of fellow human beings. He has to accept from his parents, friends, teachers, relatives and others. It is to his highest advantage to avoid an atmosphere in which fictions abound, false beliefs dominate, wrong social customs prevail and even moral lapses are condoned or tolerated and to live, breathe and grow in an atmosphere in which scientific knowledge is the accepted knowledge, right beliefs dominate, higher and reformed social customs prevail and moral virtues are appreciated and followed. We can extract **maximum**

advantage from our faith only when it is placed in the right place and the right people.

Yes, faith is inevitable. It is impossible for any man related as he is to other men, not to put some kind of faith on some other men in the world. It is inherent in the nature of every man to put this or that kind of faith on some other man.

When the immutable law of Nature demands of man that he has to start and for major portion of his life mould and regulate his life on faith, how necessary it is to see that faith is rightly placed and it guides us to truth and better life. Millions of lives are blasted because faith was wrongly placed.

A STUDENT.—Kindly illustrate more fully the dangers of wrong faith.

TEACHER.—If you read papers or the reports of criminal cases you will be shocked to realize how misplaced faith wrecks life of men and women. Only a few months ago a case was published of a man who was tried for polygamy on a false personation. He was a clerk, and a married man. But at one place he posed as an officer. On that ground he got betrothed to a good and socially well-placed girl. At another place he made another pose perhaps of a candidate for an I.C.S. examination. He married a third girl. At still another place he pretended to be a very highly placed business man. A lawyer got interested in him for the marriage of his daughter. But he could not swallow the bait so gullibly as others did. He instituted enquires and the bubble burst. The man stood unmasked as a heartless villain. He was tried and punished.

Now, here their faith betrayed so many poor victims. Poor girls had to suffer ignominy and life-long misery because of the misplaced faith of their parents. They became not only a convict's brides but even deserted wives. How essential it is, then, to see that our faith is well-placed. Faith may be natural to man, but it is not in many cases helpful to man. Man should sift his faith with knowledge and experience and as far as possible, make use of it only in places where he can be safe. Faith proves a great asset only in the service of truth or true knowledge and goodness or noble endeavour and noble life and not otherwise. Good men are few. Bad man are many. We must realize this fact.

A STUDENT.—Should we not, Sir, put faith in highly educated people or our friends?

TEACHER.—It is in our tendency to put faith in our friends or those highly placed ones. But every where faith should be weighed. A friend came to see me. He narrated to me two incidents which have left a lasting impression on me. A man was returning from England. He had received the highest degree of a foreign University. A friend of his told him to be an escort to his wife on her home bound journey. Both sailed from there. When they arrived in Bombay, the woman cabled her husband that she had decided to marry her escort and that he should put in papers for divorce. You can imagine the shock that the faithless wife's husband got. His own friend betrayed him. His own wife soiled his bed. How horrible ! What a misplaced faith cost the man !

In the same way, two boys following different religions were friends. I call them A and B. A had more faith in B than was good for his life. He used to call B to his house. He even introduced his sister to him. The result was that B and A's sisters fell and both fled to B's house. A wrote a pathetic letter to his sister and B that they should desist from marriage as both were too young and if his sister did not return to his house, he would commit suicide. The sister did not return. He foolishly committed suicide. It was sad that B belonged to a creed which encourages such alliances. Here, too, misplaced faith proved A's graveyard. Faith, however essential is not always beneficial.

## FAITH—A COMPENSATORY FORCE

A STUDENT.—Sir, as children we have no other way left but to accept belief and knowledge on the basis of faith in other persons. But when we grow up, should we even then have faith in others?

TEACHER.—In order to understand my position in this respect, please try to comprehend one great principle which governs our life. That great principle is this: If a person is devoid of some sensitivity or power which is necessary to give him direct and true knowledge in a particular sphere, he will not, in the absence of that sensitivity or power of his, get the direct knowledge in that sphere which that particular sensitivity or power alone can give. Now, in such a state what is the course or position left to that person to get knowledge in that sphere? The only course left to such a man devoid of that power, is to put his faith on the teachings, word, opinions or commandments of any other such person as is believed by him to possess the direct-knowledge-imparting power in that department of Nature.

A STUDENT.—Kindly illustrate it.

TEACHER.—I have often observed one tall young man aged about twentyfour being led by hand by a boy aged about seven or eight years. This tall young man is blind. One day I saw him in a helpless state appealing to the young boy to just give him his hand. The boy was attracted by something unusual. He left the hand of the blind man and ran after the unusual but fascinating sight. I heard the blind young pathetically saying to the boy, "Oh brother! Do not leave me. Take me by hand! Have pity on your blind brother!" The boy also at once ran to his help. Here the blind person had to put faith in the boy who possessed eyes. He trusted his guidance. He accepted

as right the road which the boy settled for him. Here there was a case of complete faith and trust reposed by the sightless youth in the child with eye-sight. The boy became the guide and the blind youth became the guided one. Here there was no need to tell the twenty-four years old blind youth that he should have faith in the boy. He accepted the fact as self-evident.

I went to see an officer who was hard of hearing. He had two courses left to him to make the interviews intelligible. He had an audio-phone which he applied to his ears and he could hear. Otherwise he had a subordinate who loudly communicated to him what the visitor said or what the telephone communicated.

When I was a young boy I passed by a street. I saw a well-dressed cripple sitting on a cushion. I enquired as to who he was. I was told that he was the Managing Director of the firm which consisted of brothers who were quite grown up. I was told, "All his brothers have so much faith in that cripple that they would undertake no business without his guidance."

It is their experience that the cripple's instinct guides better than the combined reasoning of them all. Here the word 'instinct' was used for power which intuitively led him to what was best under the circumstances. Their firm flourished so long as that cripple was alive. It dwindled after his demise. The cripple commanded trust because he possessed a direct-knowledge-imparting-power or unerring instinct in that profession. Great controversy is still raging over reason and intuition. Reason proceeds by way of logic. Intuition is understood as a power of direct apprehension. It is valued as a higher power. In fact the world has yet to realize that senses and reason are not the only direct-knowledge-imparting powers. There are several other powers which give us direct knowledge.

A STUDENT. — What are those powers, Sir ?

TEACHER. — Besides sense organs and intellectual powers we have another group of powers known as knowledge-imparting-consciousness of self or ego or "I".

A STUDENT. — Please, explain this.

TEACHER. — All of you know that a breast-suckling infant has no consciousness of "I" and "others". He does not say or apprehend "*I am sucking the milk from my mother's breast*". This consciousness dawns on him after sometime. But what



concerns society most is that phase of man's self consciousness in which he awakens to the sense of his personal responsibility. This consciousness alone can make him feel his responsibility towards others, for then he can refrain from evil thoughts and deeds in relation to others. It is then that if caught red-handed in a crime, he feels ashamed. If this sense is very strong, he says, "I am ashamed of the crime I have committed." Attributing sin or virtue to self is the direct result of the awakening of self-consciousness or consciousness of ego. Society knows that upto a certain age, this consciousness is absent. Hence children upto a certain age are absolved from the responsibility of any crime.

A STUDENT.—Then, Sir, awakening of such a consciousness is of great value to man.

TEACHER.—It is. This consciousness of self, ego or I, as distinguished from others, paves a way for a new world of right and wrong. It is then that he begins to distinguish between what belongs to him and what belongs to others. "I" and "others" appear to him not as words but as realities. He begins to say, "I am I" and "he is he". All moral life starts from this distinction. When he sacrifices interests and life of others for his "I" or "self", he is condemned as immoral. If his own discriminating sense grows higher and keener, he begins to condemn himself also. It is said of a great man known as Maharishi that his father left all his princely estate in an encumbered state. An application was made by creditors of the father for the appointment of an official receiver to manage the estate and pay them. The creditors believed that the son would put up a fight. Great was their amazement when the son placed all documents and records in court saying that the creditors could have them. This extraordinarily generous gesture produced a dramatic effect in court. One creditor was so deeply moved by the gesture that he sobbed in open court. Even tell-tale tears hung on the eye-lashes of the judge. All creditors left the property in the hands of the son to manage and pay them. How did that great man take up such a momentous step? It is recorded in his life that he had the sense to realize that what belonged to others did not belong to him. This consciousness of his responsibility to others made him to play a

part which falls to the lot of the chosen or elect few. This consciousness is quite distinct from physical sense organs and logic.

A STUDENT.—Indeed so. The higher this consciousness grows, more useful it proves in the evolution of moral and higher life.

TEACHER.—True. As every rational man is not necessarily a highly cultured and illumined soul—as illumination and culture grow with the growth of mental powers—so every person possessing consciousness of “I” or “ego” or “self” is not necessarily a highly moral soul. The sense of responsibility and respect for rights of others etc., grows with higher evolution of this consciousness. But this should be borne in mind that anybody who is devoid of the consciousness of “I” or “self” or who deliberately destroys it, destroys along with it all chances of the awakening in himself the sense of responsibility. Such a person either becomes a moral imbecile or reduces his consciousness to one of a stone or a log or clay. Man is higher or lower according to the richness or poverty of higher or lower powers or consciousnesses.

A STUDENT.—If such is the glaring fact of life, the task of parents and teachers is one of the greatest responsibility, for it is they who have to develop the powers in the child's life. They have to evolve him in the mould of higher consciousnesses. They have not only to illumine his mind but awaken and sharpen in him the sense of responsibility towards others. Indeed the task of a teacher is the task of a great architect or builder of human life.

TEACHER.—Indeed so. The greatest defect in the modern education is that teachers are hired people. They work for gain and not for love. They are more concerned with stuffing the child's mind with what is contained in text books than with evolving their mind and awakening higher consciousnesses in them. It is sad that the child at its most plastic age is entrusted to hirelings. Education should be a mission and not a profession. Teachers now are wage-earners. They want more and more wages to make them work. They have no moral incentive. Hence they do not create moral atmosphere. They create atmosphere of selfishness. The whole system is therefore rotten from top to bottom. Law may be a profession. Medicine

may be a profession. But education is not a profession. It is a mission. It is not a way to get gold. It is a means to produce gold in the life of children so that they may do golden deeds. In fact all that concerns the life of a child should be a mission.

A STUDENT.—Sir, the world considers this to be a Utopian dream.

TEACHER.—But our most worshipful Master has actualized this dream. Several souls have adopted teaching as a mission of life and not as a shop to gain money. In our schools, we have, therefore, several teachers who in practice possess higher life. Hence the moral atmosphere that prevails in our institutions is felt as the special feature of all our schools.

A STUDENT.—Sir, blessed are they who receive training in such an atmosphere and at the feet of such teachers.

## FAITH IN HIGHER SOULS

A STUDENT.—Sir, I fully realize the fact that it is impossible for a man to plan and live his life without putting faith in some one. I also fully realize that it is essential for a man who does not possess any particular power needed for having direct apprehension in any particular sphere of knowledge to put faith in one who possesses that power. This is why a blind man should trust a man with eyes so far as the world of form and colour is concerned, an illiterate man to trust an enlightened person, a patient to trust his experienced doctor, a soldier to trust his general etc. etc. In all these various ways man trusts and is able to profit by the knowledge of others. But you talked about higher feelings. Will you kindly explain how and why we should trust a higher soul ?

TEACHER.—There is a sense called sense of justice. This is a higher sense. It sprouts in rare souls. These souls expose the long standing but unjust order of the day. Their strong sense enables them to see the horror of injustice. They speak with the tongue of fire. They emit sparks of new light. These sparks reach fit souls. They develop faith in them. They stand firm by them as soldiers of war. The great soul is one. But these devoted admirers of his make that one into many and a great conflict arises. The blind or unregenerate souls distrust the higher being. A furious battle is fought between the believers and the non-believers. The believers are blessed because they side with the right cause. Their faith assures them blessings of having served a right cause. The great Huxley caught the glimpse of the wonderful truth discovered by the great Darwin. His faith in Darwin was so full, so rich and so complete that it never wavered. Huxley fought the battles for Darwin. He was called

"Darwin's bull-dog". If Darwin discovered the unique truth, Huxley confirmed and propagated it. Galileo died in prison but his great admirers carried his light to the world. Theoder Parker ignited the flame to burn down the most infamous institution of slavery. The believers in him carried his unfinished work to perfection. Great reformers are no doubt lonely figures. The believers in them make them a host in themselves. The higher souls are blessed. But believers in them are not less blessed. If humanity has to thank the higher souls, it pats on the back also the believers in them. The position of a believer in a higher cause is also enviable.

A STUDENT. — Then, Sir, faith in higher souls is a great gift to a possessor.

TEACHER. — It is indeed a great gift. People who lack faith in a great soul or having once placed faith in him waver and fall, are most unfortunate. In themselves they are not worth anything. By uniting with a higher soul they can become something and their lives can yield some rich harvest. But shorn of the power of faith in higher souls they lead barren lives, neither full of honour nor full of blessings. Most unfortunate are they who grow hostile to higher souls. They live for devastation and end by frustrating the promise and future hope of their fruitful life. It is, therefore, highly necessary for a man who wants to lead a blessed life that he should have faith where faith is due.

A STUDENT. — It is a fine principle of life to put our faith where faith is due. But how to determine the fact that somebody is worthy of our faith.

TEACHER. — Our inherent powers sometimes determine for us who is worthy of our faith. I saw a Sikh missionary. He was known to be a man of good character. His face used to betoken his *bhakti bhava*. He was once preaching when a young man was drawn towards him. It was a magnetic attraction. Neither logic nor experience had any hand in it. His instinct, it may be said, drew him towards the great preacher. In fact his inherent powers intuitively found in that preacher the most suitable environment for self expression and growth. The young man gave up the thought of marriage in order to live for that preacher. He was running a shop. Whatever he earned he placed at the feet of his Guru. He became a tower

of strength for that preacher. This disciple made the gospel of his Guru popular and extensively known. I saw another young man who saw a Sufi faqir of unblemished character dancing and singing and getting half-tranced in the ecstasy of his devotion. He was fascinated by him. From that day he left everything and went and lived in his *Dargah*. He passed all his life at his feet and continued to live for him even after the Sufi died.

A STUDENT.—Is there any other way also which can help us to put faith where faith is due.

TEACHER.—Yes, there is. By long and continued experience of a person as our friend and benefactor, we can place and strengthen our faith in him. A child in this case, places before us an example of firm faith. A child receives services and loving care from its mother. Upto a pretty long age, he trusts none so much as his mother. I have seen children aged ten or twelve years running to their mother in time of danger. Physically, mother is weak. But she has in her soul that mighty force which carries everything before it. A mother would rush into the mouth of a lion to rescue her child. The instinct of the child, therefore, guides the child better than grown-up man's reason. Grown-up man is guided by several desire forces not congenial to the growth of strong faith in a right place.

A grown-up man aged about thirty-seven had gone out on business. He returned at 11 P.M., tired and famished. His wife was sleeping on one roof and the mother on another adjoining roof. The young man *trusted* his wife. He told her how famished and exhausted he had returned. "You are a grown-up man, you can just sleep and in the morning I shall give you good nourishing breakfast. At this late hour it is difficult for me to go down and cook." The mother was listening to this talk. She atonce got up and said, "Yes daughter, you can afford to sleep when your husband has returned hungry and tired. But I won't get a wink when my son is hungry. Please go to sleep. I am going to cook for him." This is to be a mother. Almost every mother is like this. But how many of us have that faith which her love for us commands and demands. A poet has most emphatically brought into glowing sunshine this unique love of mother by narrating a figurative account of a mother who was murdered by her son as his mistress wanted his mother's heart.

This callous son tore his mother's heart off her body, kept it in a dish, placed it over his head and was carrying it to his mistress. On the way he stumbled and fell. The heart of his dead mother spoke out of her shocked agony : "Beloved child, I hope you have not been injured." Such is the most impressive way a good son had described mother's love. And yet how many of us retain our faith in her all our life.

A STUDENT.—Should we, Sir, follow everything our mother asks us to do ?

TEACHER.—I do not mean that. What I ask is whether you have faith in her love for you. There are young men who immediately after marriage put so much faith in their wives that they blindly follow their counsels to such an extent that if the wife tells such a husband that his mother is his enemy he believes it and behaves according to such a wrong belief. A wife may become enemy of her husband. Is it not a fact that thousands of wives divorce their husbands ? The love of such wives is built on sand. But how many mothers would divorce their sons ? I have seen mothers standing as guardian angles of their children in cases of extreme trial. I have seen imbecile children. So long their mothers are alive they are very well taken care of. But as soon as they lose their mothers their condition becomes most miserable. It was a Sikh youth who once told me: "Sir, my wife is dead. She has left two baby daughters. I wish I had died. In that case, these babies would have had the guarantee of devoted care. Even if she had married again, she would have yoked her husband to the care of her children. If I marry, I would not be able to ensure them that love and care". Such are the experiences of the world. In spite of this, mother becomes a neglected factor because a son does not need her care. He wants a wife. But why should he lose faith in his mother's love ? Man is a most fickle being born on earth. His loyalties are mere moon-shine. *In fact, man, as a rule, lacks loyalties. This is because his faith is weak.*

A STUDENT.—What is the cause of this volatile, unstable or weak faith of man ?

TEACHER.—Primarily it is man's self-conceit generated by his excessive self-love which robs him of the treasure of right faith in higher souls or great benefactors. They cannot see the beauty of virtues in higher souls or the favours bountifully

received from benefactors. When they fail to appreciate virtues or services received, how can their heart flow towards them and how can their poverty of soul lead them to put faith in them. Unless we accept another as our superior or our benefactor, we would fail to develop faith and profit by that faith. Faith is a link which binds souls, especially devotees, with their idol, followers with their leader and disciples with their *Guru*. Faith rightly placed has given us wonderful instances of devotion of one soul for another and cases of exceptional sacrifice. Only the faith should be rightly placed.

A STUDENT.—What is meant by faith rightly placed ?

TEACHER.—I have told you before and I repeat it now that *faith in truth and goodness is the right faith and hence faith in one who advocates the cause of a particular truth or a particular phase of goodness deserves to be trusted*. I just quote here two counsels given to their children by two fathers. You know fathers are worthy of our great respect. We should not forget their favours and great services. But truth and goodness are greater than everything else in the world.

A father once counselled his son thus:

“Dear apple of my eyes, I am responsible for your being in the world. I have therefore to direct your good steps in the light of what I have learnt in the world. Remember, in this world—constituted as it is—nothing counts so much as money ! Money covers all defects ! Look at me ! I started from nowhere. But I instinctively realized that I should get wealthy, if I wanted the proud and the humble to respect me. I showed no mercy to anybody where my monetary interests were concerned. I became adamant to all the tears of those men and women who had money dealings with me. My pile went on mounting. The foolish people whom I showed no mercy did satisfy the venom of their heart by cursing me. Such curses do not count. They affect none but the man who curses. Foolish people call me names. They say it is inauspicious to utter my name in the morning. But who has won ? I have won all around. I have increased in my progeny. I have commanded matrimonial ties from the most proud. My beloved wealth has made me an object of envy. Trust no man. Trust wealth. Talk of goodness is all bosh. Even if you do good, do it on business lines. Give something in charity.



But see that it is talked about. Give no pie anywhere if you do not get the value of it in name. Let us be *declared* as charitable. Unselfish charity is a dream of an idealist. We are realists. If you follow these instructions of mine to the letter, you would live a happy and envied life and command great respect."

What do you think, boys, of such an advice. Mind this spirit is not confined to this or that man or this or that land. Wherever greed exists, this spirit sprouts up.

A STUDENT.—Sir, such an advice is indeed dreadful. To trust wealth and not goodness is to display materialistic nature of a criminal kind. This spirit is at the root of the *ubiquitous* dealings of man. Such a soil of heart proves fruitful for the production of Shakespeare's Shylockian.

TEACHER.—There was another father who counselled his son thus:

"Dear son, do not forget that others exist ! Do not forget that they have certain fundamental rights—right to life, right to liberty, right to honour, right to being treated as human beings etc. Respect those rights. Do not transgress on them. Be generous even when you have to be just. Treat every woman as a future mother of our race. In her honour lies our honour. In her greatness lies the greatness of our race. Do not degrade her by sex-appeals or otherwise. Be loyal to your wife. Remember monogamy is the best institution. Besides this, you have to develop your credit in the world. Let that credit be the credit of trustworthy character. Let people say about you, 'There goes the real man, we can entrust our very life in his charge !' This is not enough. You have not merely to respect the rights of others, but you have also to replenish the treasures of a good life by enriching them with your unstinted service wherever and whenever you get a chance. He who can give to others can also earn. Let your wealth be the riches of love and unselfish service done to mankind. Remember, you are above everything a soul. Your greatest privilege is to possess more and more the true knowledge of your soul. You have to get earnest in getting free from all low-loves and develop various higher or altruistic forces. Thus would you grow to the full stature of your moral and spiritual manhood."

What do you think of such an advice ?

A STUDENT.—This indeed is a heavenly advice. The great prayer that was broadcast by the President of America and which moved the world contained the following appeal : "Yet most of all, grant us brotherhood not only for this day but for all our years—brotherhood not of words but of acts and deeds. We are all of us children of the earth. Grant us that simple knowledge. If our brothers are oppressed, then we are oppressed. If they hunger, we hunger. If their freedom is taken away, ours is not secure. Grant us the common faith that man shall know bread and peace."

TEACHER.—The unique but simple truth that we are all connected as limbs of the great organism of human and sub-human kingdoms and that if we harm human or sub-human kingdoms, we harm ourselves, is the very foundation and the root of all sublime moral principles of life. Recognition of this principle and its realization in our daily life would make us really noble and worthy of living as units of the great fraternity of human and sub-human worlds. Ignorance of this simple knowledge makes us hurt those who are so dearly related to us, makes us kill those who are parts of us, to torture and tyrannize over those who are with us, *children of the same mother earth*.

We must join all in the prayer that our faith in that simple knowledge that we all are related as children of the same mother earth and so closely connected that by harming others we dig our own graves, may grow from man to man, so that more of humanity may dwell in us, more of peace may descend on earth and more of love may prevail in the world.

## HURDLES IN THE WAY OF FAITH

**A STUDENT.**—You told us, Sir, that conceit and selfishness born of excessive love of self robs a man of faith in another. Is there any other reason which hampers or blasts faith in another?

**TEACHER.**—Yes, there are some other reasons also—the next in importance being fear. The lava of fear destroys man's faith in himself and others. There was a young Sikh Jat student who was poor. He joined the college before I took over charge for the second time. He had some unhappy experience. When I was convinced of his poverty, I felt genuine sympathy for him and meant to help him. I gave him free lodging and full-fee concession. I forgot that incident. But after he passed Intermediate examination, I continued my help to him in other ways. Years after, he said, "Sir, when you first made a move to exempt me from fees, I became afraid. I thought within myself why such a big man as a Principal should—unsought—show such a kindness to me. I wanted to avoid you. After some months, other students began to talk about you as to how you help poor students. It was then that my fear began to abate and my heart was rehabilitated by faith."

Now, if the young man had not been helped in his faith by other students, his loss of faith in general humanity would have lost him faith in me and his future would have been doomed. He had experience of utterly selfish people of whom he had a natural dread. This experience filled him with fear. How sad it is that the base portion of mankind by its baseness robs the average man's faith in goodness of man. It is the highest duty of every man to develop and display in his life what is good and noble so that others may have an experience of it.

A friend wrote:—

"An old friend of mine who had not seen me for nearly

quarter of a century or more, happened to come to my house. Myself, my wife and my children all vied with one another in fulfilling the highest duties of a host. My friend parted from us deeply impressed. When they came next, I witnessed his wife receiving our services with some coldness and with the air of a stranger. I felt confused. When the guests had gone, I had a talk with my wife. I said that I felt chilled by the icy indifference betokened by my friend's wife. She seemed as if to repel our offer of services. She said, 'I also marked it. She has become afraid of us. She perhaps thinks we have some selfish motive in serving them. Next time, let me serve her.' They came again, as we were their only friends in that strange town. I served my friend only. I did not even so much as take notice of her. We repeated this dose twice or thrice more. She noticed this change of attitude. After some more visits she confessed that our generous hospitality had caused fear in her mind as to our motives. She had sad experiences of men. Hardly once is a guest welcome. Here we gave them warmest welcome every time. Because the experience was new, she felt a natural mistrust. Thereafter, she not only appreciated but valued our warm reception."

The general selfish attitude of man creates in the average man a fear of others and mistrust of them. A selfless service is not believed in. A selfless man is considered almost an absent commodity in the world. Hence if they meet a selfless man they feel his selflessness at the outset a mere pose. Hence faith in a selfless man comes after a hard struggle. Doubting the motives of others is a rule. Faith is an exception.

A STUDENT.—It is a sad thing indeed that man should fall into an easy habit of doubting the motives of others and hence even of good men. How can such people have faith even in the existence of nobility and unselfish service of others. Those base and selfish multitude of men who have shown by their callous conduct the dark side of human character have not only degenerated their own life, but destroyed faith of millions in higher, better and altruistic life of others. A bad and selfish man is therefore no asset to humanity but a cankerous liability.

TEACHER.—True. Even in homes where so much parental love flows there are children who have no faith. Men are

obsessed by fear mentality.

A STUDENT.—Why is it so, Sir ?

TEACHER.—Those children who see only the frowning look of a father or reproving gesture of a mother become afraid of them. But those who catch the loving aspect of parental attitude become fond of them. These latter have faith in them.

I saw a very stern father. His children were in mortal fear of him. He loved them all. But he was over anxious to see them highly educated and well-settled in life. His earnestness kept him stern. But he had one daughter. She intuitively saw the profound parental love in her father's soul. Hence she never avoided him. She went to him even when he was busy in office work. Her faith conquered her father. Hence he was always ready to listen to her. When the father became stern with any child beyond endurance, she would go straight to her father and say, "Papa, you are to blame." He would soften at once. It struck all as a strange experience. This ruthless official was all ears to his daughter and never refused her request. Faith begets faith as fear begets mistrust.

A STUDENT.—That girl, Sir, was a blessed child. Even most of us have no such faith in our fathers though they work their hands to bones for our good.

ANOTHER STUDENT.—In our house, too, Sir, one sister commands the greatest influence on our father. She is not afraid of him while we all stand in awe of him.

TEACHER.—Faith knows no fear as fear blasts all faith. Even in wedlock there are few pairs who build their life on faith. My hobby is Palmistry. Sometimes highly educated married girls come to me to have a reading of their hand. The question they invariably ask is: "Would my husband continue to love me and be loyal to me ?" I often ask them, "Why have you no faith in your husbands ? How can you build life on mistrust ?" They do not tell me straight away, "We suffer from the blasting malady of fear and its child mistrust." They just try to explain away. Faith begets faith. They have no faith in themselves even. How can they have faith in others !

A STUDENT.—You think, Sir, that faith in one's own self is very necessary to help one to put faith in others.

TEACHER.—In most of the cases, yes. Once I went to see a family. The members seemed serious and gloomy. I asked

them why was there so much gloom around them ? The mother said, "You know our boy. He has gone to . . . . He has been away for several months. He shows no intention of returning. His young wife is pining away in grief. Now she says, 'Send me to my husband. He is all that I have to live for in the world. I shall do all that is possible to win him back.' You know the boy. Do you think he would even tolerate her ?"

Their fear was not groundless. The girl had no charm. She was too plain in her features. However, I asked the girl, "Do you think you would succeed ?" She said with a note of confidence, "Yes, I shall. Please send me"

I was influenced by her note of confidence. I said, "My friends, send her. She will conquer him. She has faith in herself and in him. This is a great thing. You will be committing a grave blunder if you stand in her way."

With palpitating heart the mother sent the girl to her husband. I met this young pair after a few months. It was a sight to see how the prodigal simply doted on his plain featured but good wife. He seemed all ears to what she said and all ready to do her smallest behest. Faith had conquered where fear would have caused a mess.

A STUDENT.—In the above case, Sir, faith saved a family from a domestic tragedy. Faith proved a moral healer.

TEACHER.—Faith is a healer while fear is a frenzy. While fear demoralizes, faith emboldens. One of my own students who was not good at studies had an air of self-confidence. He would also feel at home even with strangers. He had an interview before a board for service. While my best boys got poor jobs, this student carried the whole board practically with himself. By his faith in himself, he created an atmosphere all favourable to himself. The result was that he was selected for an officer's job. His brilliant class-fellows were selected for clerical jobs. I asked him how he had won such a good opinion of the board. "I took them for friends," he said, "I felt at home when I spoke to them. I was respectful to them but I did not cringe before them. They all felt pleased with me." While this boy won, there were others who were so much demoralized that they lost in interview their chance for a job. They were filled with fear. In examination hall the same thing

happens. Those who fear are not able to write what they know. Those who are blissfully free of fear, do their best and pass. Hence want of faith in one's own self or others sometimes costs us dearly.

I met a remarkable girl at Bombay. Her mother was in the education department in another province. The mother and her children had come to tour to see far off places in India. At one place they all had to be presented before a magistrate, perhaps for identification. They were kept waiting. This girl aged hardly fourteen years entered the court and went straight to the magistrate and pleaded her case before him as to how she and her mother and others were kept waiting outside and how they feared they would miss the train. She spoke to him fearlessly and with faith. The Magistrate smiled and said, "Dear daughter, I must attend to you first." He called them all and disposed of their case in a while. He told the mother, "You are a blessed mother to have such a child." When she met me, she exercised the same influence on me. We were putting up in the same *Dharamshala*. She came to us and spoke in a way as if she were our old friend. I have often remembered that girl's beautiful spirit of faith in herself and others. She trusted me and my wife as if we were her parents. You could not withstand her faith in you. Let me hope she does not meet treachery in life which may shatter her faith in the humanity of man.

A STUDENT.—Am I to understand, Sir, that those who catch sight of better part of life in others live by faith and those who visualize the dark side of life live by fear. Those who see the father's frowning looks only get afraid of him. Those who see his loving side beyond it, grow near to him by faith. Similarly, those who see humanity in man straight away, appeal to it and win. But those who see selfishness and treachery in man shrink from him. Fear and faith are due to our apprehension of the dark and bright sides of life respectively.

TEACHER.—In the main, yes. Another factor is want of faith or diffidence in one's own life. Those who have no faith in themselves hardly put faith in others. They generally lose faith everywhere. Hence cowards are the last persons to have faith—a faith that breaks not, nor wavers—in others, because they have none of that commodity in their own self.

A STUDENT.—Sir, does not fear make one possessed of it ?

TEACHER.—It does. Once I was going to *Mandir* from the college when I saw a heifer running. I got out of its way and stood till she should run away. As soon as she saw us standing, she went some way and then stood defiantly facing us. I was hard put to. I had my wife and child with me. I knew that if I made a move to go she would run after us. In the meantime a *tongawala* passed by. I called to him. I said, "Please, help me against the frenzied animal." He took up a stick and rushed at her. She took to heels. The uplifted stick cured her of the frenzy of fear.

There was a man who once narrated to me how he escaped from a danger. There was a dog which used to attack the wayfarers once they showed fear. This gentleman also had to walk that way. He said, "With steady feet and big stick I walked my way ignoring the dog's presence. The dog instinctively knew that I was not afraid of it, and I was not going to attack it. I repeated this experiment several times and it has proved successful. Fear on both sides leads to frenzy and frenzy leads to tragedies."

A STUDENT.—What is fear, Sir ?

TEACHER.—It is a painful and sometimes maddening emotion caused by some real or fancied danger to one's self, one's precious possessions, one's kith and kin, one's honour etc. It affects us according to our temperament. If it overwhelms us, we get demoralized and become unfit to face danger. We become cowards when it overwhelms us.

A STUDENT.—Is it possible for man to have no fear in life ?

TEACHER.—No, that state of mind is not possible. It is also not desirable. But those who in the hour of danger keep presence of mind conquer its evil influences.

Two soldiers of repute had a great name for absolute heroism. At every moment of danger they were the first to dash forward. They served as an inspiration to others. The war was over. They went into a restaurant and they were heard saying, "Let us have care-free meals. Oh, how much we had to exert to show courage for the sake of others! How few know that we too were under the spell of fear." He is not brave who is insensitive to fear. He is brave who conquers it by faith—faith in one's own powers, faith in a great cause and faith in



golden texture of goodness and in higher people.

A STUDENT.—Will you, Sir, illustrate these truths?

TEACHER.—Condition of the English was not good when the wars in the South were going on. It was Clive whose faith in his own judgment impelled him to solicit his officer to trust him with a force to take Arcot. His courage saved the situation. This was a case of faith in oneself. William Pitt, Earl of Chatham saved England when the English people had lost morale. He breathed his spirit into them when he said, "I know I can save England and I know no other man can." Self-confidence is an antidote against the poison of fear.

Lala Lajpat Rai said in his posthumous letter that he was not a brave man. But the sight of suffering countrymen urged him not to take any rest but to redress their age-long wrongs. The cause made him brave.

Gandhiji advised Congressmen to go and live among *Hurs* —the notorious law-breakers of Sindh—if they meant to convert them. He had faith in the inherent goodness of a human soul and he was sure non-violence would make a forceful appeal to them and would turn them away from their evil ways.

## HIGHEST KIND OF FAITH

A STUDENT.—What is the highest kind of faith, Sir, which one ought to entertain for his supreme good?

TEACHER.—Supreme good of man consists in the supreme good of the soul of man. Man consists of body and soul. Both are very precious things for man. Their preservation and evolution should be the highest concern of man. But body, though a precious possession, is after all a tool in the hands of soul. It is through body that the soul is able to express itself. But for body, soul is not able to feel love or hate, happiness or pain and even get the knowledge and recognition of the existences around. Therefore, though body is not a negligible thing, soul is definitely more precious. Concern for our soul, therefore, should be our main concern. If we take care of our soul, the body would be taken care of by itself, but if we neglect soul and make body our chief concern, we commit the foolish act of placing the cart before the horse. Those are our best benefactors who help our soul-life.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate the faith of one man in another when faith is based on the higher interests of soul?

TEACHER.—Just as there are sultry winds which scorch our skin and make life uncomfortable and we sigh for cool climate or air-conditioned room, in the same way awakened souls feel the heat of lower passions and lower desires and sigh for one who could give them some freedom from the scorching heat of these passions and thus help them to live in the calm and quiet atmosphere of higher soul-life. If they happen to get a benefactor who helps them to that extent, then they not only feel drawn towards him but in certain cases develop unshakeable faith in him. There was a young man whom I knew. He had

heard certain things about the beauty of a life of freedom from lust and greed. He belonged to a high family. He had chances enough to get and earn money. He could marry and settle down but there was a hungering desire in him which grew with time and which made him to realize that he would be wasting his life if he took to business and married. I don't discuss the question whether he was right or wrong. I simply state what is a fact, that is, he wanted to escape from the control of greed and lust. One day he found a *Sufi* whose life attracted him. This *Sufi* was detached from money and sex-temptations. His admirers gave him money but he freely distributed it among the poor without keeping a pie for himself. He was unmarried but his self-control and detached life kept him clean in sexual matters. The sight of this much beauty in the life of that *Sufi*, so magnetically attracted this young man that, I am told, he ran away from his house and dedicated his life at the feet of the *Sufi*. He became his disciple. The atmosphere of purity and benevolence which he found in the *Sufi*, developed deep reverence and unshakeable faith in him. Before accepting this young man as a disciple, the *Sufi* put him to hard tests. This young man was a vegetarian. The *Sufi*, had no such scruple. One day, he gave a sharp knife into the hands of the young man and said, "Go and take hold of that hen and cut off her head with this knife." Without a moment's hesitation, the young man took hold of the hen and chopped off her head.

A STUDENT.—Was this act of the young man a good act?

TEACHER.—No, it was not good. From our view point, it was a hateful act.

A STUDENT.—His faith, Sir, then misled him.

TEACHER.—The fact is that the young man yearned for certain things. He found in that *Sufi* the only place to satisfy his longings. He therefore, was prepared to pay any price. It was his misfortune that in order to get those things, he got a benefactor who was in other respects possessed of certain weaknesses. The *Sufi* had learnt that his disciple could profit by him only when he had unshakeable faith in him. He therefore tested him in many ways in order to deepen his faith. So far as the need of unshakeable faith is concerned, there can be no doubt that it is the one essential thing for a disciple to unite

himself with his benefactor. The *Sufi* was mistaken in so far as he put his disciple in a trial which was sinful. The *Sufi* did not believe it to be sinful. Here, therefore, was a case of a perceptor and a disciple both of whom were ignorant of certain things. The *Sufi* believed that such a trial was essential for the disciple. The disciple believed that his perceptor who could subdue his lust and greed and help him in devotion, could not but be perfect in this world where greed and lust have made demons of man.

A STUDENT.—Sir, how far did that faith help the young man?

TEACHER.—This much I have learnt from several reliable people that the young man was above greed. His life towards women was above reproach. He used to pass hours in meditation and devotion. He felt that life to be a supremely precious possession. His faith therefore, helped him to the ideal that he had.

A STUDENT.—Was that, Sir, a supreme ideal?

TEACHER.—No, it was not. Man's moral problem is not so simple an affair. Lust and greed are not his only two curses. He is obsessed by lots of other passions. We in our society call them low-loves and low-hates. Even if a man were to get freedom from all low-loves and low-hates, he does not advance very far. Liberation from low-loves and low-hates is no doubt a wonderful achievement and in certain respects are an incomparable gain. But as freedom from all diseases does not carry body very far, if it has no robust health and strong vitality, in the same way, freedom from low-loves and low-hates which means freedom from soul-diseases is not enough. The human soul ought to possess robust health and strong and progressive power or vitality. This is possible only when we develop various kinds of altruistic forces. This is the right, true and nature-based ideal. That young man no doubt got some freedom from lust and greed but he was ignorant about various other low-loves and low-hates and was unconscious of need for evolving various altruistic forces. He was therefore, on the lowest rung of the ladder. His ideal was at very low ebb. For that petty ideal, he sought also a preceptor comparatively petty. But he was no doubt far ahead of those who worship lust and greed and who, therefore, live for body and bodily greeds and who

commit various sins and crimes and produce misery and pain all around.

A STUDENT.—Is there any such preceptor in the world who can help human souls to accomplish or to endeavour after the complete and supremely blessed ideal of life ?

TEACHER.—Yes, there is. I have told you before this also that the safest guide is one who has evolved in his soul-life and on this earth, complete and all-sided love of truth, complete and all-sided love for goodness, complete and all-sided repulsion for all kinds of untruth, and complete and all-sided repulsion for all things antagonistic to goodness. Only such a supremely blessed soul called the Devatma, is fitted by Nature to help human souls to get freedom from various untruths and evil-producing low-loves and low-hates and to evolve various higher and altruistic feelings. He is able to achieve this in the lives of individual souls by means of his *Deva Jyoti* or soul-illuminating light and *Deva Tej* or true liberty-giving and soul-evolving power. We believe the worshipful Founder of the Dev Samaj to be the Devatma.

A STUDENT.—Have you got any practical proof in your life, Sir, of the claim that you make of the efficacy of the light and power of your most worshipful preceptor or Guru ?

TEACHER.—Yes, I have. From my childhood, I was attracted by the life and example of my revered father to the life of *vairagya* or renunciation. Like ordinary human souls hungering after some higher ideal, I believed that life of renunciation was everything. Had I come across a *sadhu* who had really renounced home and worldly ties and embraced the life of devotion of this or that God in a forest nook or on a mountain peak, I would have perhaps been living in some forest or mountain cave. Now, I consider that life to be a devastation. It is a life of run away people. It is a life shorn of responsibilities. The individual may gain some quietness of mind, but so far as humanity is concerned, it is utterly a useless life. It is not the renunciation of ties which helps us. It is the freedom from slavery to lower passions that helps us on the one hand, and it is the life of unselfish service in various relations which enriches us, on the other. This is the first lesson that I learnt at the feet of my Master. I, therefore, stuck to my guns.

A STUDENT.—It is not then necessary for a man, Sir, to

give up money-producing professions or home-ties in order to become good and to realize higher soul-life.

TEACHER.—In all our relations, we have the means of life and death. All that we need is the light to show us in what lies our life and death and the power to guide us on the path of life. In my society there are men who are doing one or other business or profession or are or have been in various services. They are strictly honest. They consider their business or service not only as a means of maintenance but as an avenue to do good service to others. They therefore grow noble. One such good soul served the Government for more than thirty years. He retired as a *Tehsildar*. Wherever he went, people blessed him. His main object everywhere was to use his powers for the good of others. While he served the Government he did not oppress the people. Wherever he went he scattered these blessings. People called him *Farishta Tehsildar*. He was also a married man but by the light and power of his Guru—Devatma—he did not suck poison from marriage. He was comparatively free from undue attachment. He helped his children in the path of higher life. The poison, therefore, which lower souls imbibe from business and domestic life is due not to business or marriage but to the low-loves and low-hates which they gratify in these phases of life. Service under the Government does not compel us to take bribes. It gives us scope for honesty and service. But by our selfishness we become dishonest and domineering. We extract poison from where we could have extracted something more serviceable for higher life.

A STUDENT.—Sir, it means there can be freedom from lust and greed even when we do not renounce homes and professions.

TEACHER.—Yes, there is and there can be. Several people in the Dev Samaj have illustrated this truth in their lives. No body can stop us from becoming honest and charitable, the two ways to reduce or crush greed. No body can stop us from being completely chaste and monogamous and anxious to develop in the life of our partner the zeal for noble service. In that case, marriage gives us a co-traveller and a great helper in the path of noble life. The old teachings find nothing but poison in domestic and other ties. Our Guru teaches us that man can grow very high and noble while maintaining his

marriage ties and his business. All that matters is the approach that we make. If our approach is through low-loves and low-hates, we become degraded. If our approach is through feelings of purity, chastity, benevolence, charity, generosity and unselfish service we have got the unlimited scope for progress in higher and spiritual life. It is because of this wonderful vision which I got of my Bhagwan's unique light and power that attracted me to him as to a magnet. I realized him as the ship of life and hope. My soul found peace and rest in him.

A STUDENT.—But why did you then, Sir, give up your old profession? Did you not run away from your profession.

TEACHER.—No, I did not run away from my profession. There are professions and professions. I gave up one profession to follow another. In the world there are professions given to earning money but there is the largest scope for the profession of earning something higher. It consists in living in the world and doing the actual service of ministering to the higher interests of souls. This is called missionary work. My legal profession used to take away considerable portion of my day in running about in courts. It left me very little margin for doing unselfish service of others. By giving it up, I was able to save all that time for the service of others.

A STUDENT.—There are persons, Sir, in your society who are pleaders, doctors, merchants, etc. Why did you abandon your profession when they are there?

TEACHER.—This depends upon the awakening of consciousnesses. Bhagwan's power brought about such a change in me that I could not find peace away from his feet. I found in my money-producing profession a dreadful waste of my energies. It afforded me no scope for fuller exercise of my higher feelings. Often I used to burst into tears at seeing the shackles of my profession which were corroding my soul. Once I was sitting in the chamber of a judge. He had gone to his private quarters attached to the court. Suddenly, the sight of the wastefulness of my life dawned on me. It made me so miserable that I burst into copious tears praying to my Bhagwan that my shackles may break and I may get the chance of sitting at his feet and directly receive training from him. My Bhagwan liberated me. His was the direct hand in smashing down my chains. He practically took my hand and lifted me up from the

mire. It is true I was not dishonest. But I could not tolerate spending my whole day for money. Not only the pangs of greed and lust have left me but I have been lifted up and placed in a sanatorium in which several diseases are getting more or less cured and the life of unselfish service is gradually absorbing me. This is the basis of my faith in my Master. I want to grow into this faith more and more because in the *Rupa* of my Bhagwan lies my all-sided good—physical, mental, moral and spiritual. I call the whole world to have faith in him because in his *Rupa* lies, in fact, the highest good of every human soul.

I have come to realize that I am devoid of all those unique forces which are in my Master. Hence for me there can be no more sensible, no more rational, and no more imperative alternative left than that of putting my highest faith in Him. If faith is an inevitable thing in the life of every man and it is impossible for any man to live without faith in others, then, how fortunate am I that I have found the Devatma for the placing of my faith in him. It is this faith which is my salvation.

A STUDENT.—According to you, Sir, then, everyone of us is in need of a Guru, or true spiritual guide.

TEACHER.—Yes, every person who has a soul, has the need of a soul-liberator and soul-evolver. He is most fortunate who gets such a Guru. I feel myself very fortunate because I have got such a Guru. I wish the whole world may own such a Guru.



## TESTING ONE'S FAITH

A STUDENT.—Sir, by faith in some person we are bound to accept some or most of his opinions, beliefs, or ideas as true. Is there any such test in Nature by which we may be able to sift for ourselves, what is truth from untruth ?

TEACHER.—Yes, there is a test which if scrupulously followed will lead us to the path of safety, stability and truth. One of the elements of this test is that whatever is opposed or antagonistic to any universal law of Nature is definitely false.

A STUDENT.—Will you kindly illustrate this ?

TEACHER.—You must have heard many stories of the miraculous powers of the saints and *sadhus* and miracles achieved by them. I have passed my whole time in the atmosphere of definitely religious-minded people. I was hardly aged 13 or 14 when I was taken to the shrine of a well-known Hindu *sadhu*. Naturally, the admirers of the *sadhu* entertained us with the stories of miracles supposed to have been achieved by that *sadhu*. One of these miracles was this : This *sadhu's* shrine was built on the bank of the river. It was recounted to me that a child fell into the river. There was a great hue and cry. Divers dived into the river but the child could not be found. Even his dead body was not found. The parents rent the skies with lamentations and appealed to the *sadhu* to bring them back their child alive. The *sadhu* disappeared. After seven days, the child was brought safe and sound by the *sadhu*. The boy was asked where he was. He said that as soon as he reached the bottom, he saw a white-bearded *Khwaja Khizar* standing there who took him in his lap and carried him inside the river into the place where there was no water. He fed and took care of him and kept him entertained. After sometime the *sadhu*—the miracle-worker—dived into the river and came to them. He straight

away went to *Khwaja Khizar* who greeted him with warmth and affection. The *sadhu* stayed there for a day or two and then taking the boy in his arms leapt up and came above waters. The story caught fire. The *sadhu's* fame spread. The credulous world thronged to the shrine and there was hardly any one among the hundreds of persons collected there who doubted the truth of this absurd story.

A STUDENT.—How is this story absurd, Sir ?

TEACHER.—In everyone of its details it is an absurd story. A boy who falls into water and goes to the bottom and does not come up must inevitably die of suffocation. Then there is no *Khwaja Khizar* having his abode beneath the waters. There are no buildings and gardens beneath the water. The boy was brought back after seven days. It is impossible for a boy who was under water for seven days to come above waters unscathed, unhurt, and as perfectly sound as he was when he fell into the waters. This entire story offends the laws of Nature. A simple experiment done with the *sadhu* himself would have proved the untruth of it.

A STUDENT.—Can you give us some more stories of miracles that you have heard and believed ?

TEACHER.—The town in which the above-mentioned shrine stands is said to consist of many more tombs of *pirs* and *jaqirs* than the entire population existing in the town at one time. All these tombs are worshipped on the basis that the dead *pirs* and *jaqirs* could work miracles even after death. I was given a story of one of these *jaqirs*. This *jaqir* is said to have been a fashionable youngman. He would be found walking near the bathing *ghats* reserved for women. The people naturally took it ill. My informant told me that the people were fools. That youngman was a perfect *jaqir*. He walked intentionally the bathing ghat of women and even looked at their half-naked bodies merely to create an impression on the foolish public that he was not perfect. He was anxious to hide his glory behind bushes. One day this pose of the perfect *jaqir* came to be exposed. A young child of living parents seemed to have been kidnapped by the wandering *sadhus*. The parents had faith in the perfection of this youthful *jaqir*. Hence they went and sat at the threshold of his house beseeching him to bring back to them the kindapped boy.

The *faqir* asked them to come on some appointed day. On that day the lost boy was restored to the parents by the *faqir*. The story of the restoration of the lost boy was this : This youthful *faqir* flew like a bird up into the heavens where the boy was. By his insight he had seen where the boy was. So on the appointed day he flew down to the place the boy was, took him in his arms and flew up again. The *sadhus* who had kidnapped the boy stood amazed. Without stopping anywhere, the youthful *faqir* continuously flew till he descended in his shrine. From the shrine he took the child to his house on foot. Even now there are thousands who believe this absurd story. Why would they not ? They are willing to believe. They simply resent being told the truth. Man has no wings. He cannot, therefore, fly by himself and it is impossible for a man to fly hundreds of miles. Man can go in an aeroplane. That is a machine suited as ship of air. It is in conformity with the laws of Nature. By study and pursuit of the laws of Nature, aeroplane has been made a safe ship of the air. But it is not given to man to fly into the air all unaided and simply by means of his arms.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, we are told by our parents and teachers that one great prophet of God flew upto the seventh sky on a living and breathing white horse.

TEACHER.—My reason remains the same. Neither man nor horse can fly up. Besides this, there are no skies. Whatever teachings mitigate against the laws of Nature or prove wrong when tested by laws of Nature should not be accepted. Nature alone is the firmest ground for us to tread on. Its inevitable laws alone fill us with the assurance, stability and feeling of trust. To shake our belief in the immutability of law is to take away the firm ground from underneath our feet.

A STUDENT.—My parents and teachers have taught me, Sir, that when one great Hindu *avatar* was born and he was being taken across the river, the river swelled up to kiss the feet of the future *avatar* and then not only subsided but parted in two to enable the carrier to take the precious child safe to the other bank. Can such a belief, Sir, be false ? Has not an *avatar* a privilege to be above the laws ?

TEACHER.—My boys, nobody can be above the laws of

Nature. All those whom the humanity has believed to be *avatars*, prophets or *rishis* or Son of God or *maharishi* or Buddha or *Tirthankara* etc., lived on this earth and could live only by following the laws of life and health. Like humblest people who make no claim to religiosity they took food, drank water, breathed air, slept, and in course of time, all of them obeyed the inevitable laws of death. None of them could have lived by violating these laws. In the same way river is an inanimate thing. It has no consciousness. It cannot distinguish between the saint and the sinner. To believe that it swelled up to kiss the feet of the *avatar* is a myth. It is another myth to believe that the river parted in two to let the precious child be carried safely to the other bank. All these stories offend the laws of Nature. We cannot, therefore, put our faith in them when we know the immutability of Nature's laws.

A STUDENT.—We are told, Sir, that one great prophet had only twelve breads. Out of these breads he fed hundreds of people and the remaining food could be carried in twelve full baskets. Is it not given to a great prophet to make the twelve breads serve the purpose of twelve hundred or more ?

TEACHER.—No, it is not given to any human being, be he a saint or a sinner, to violate the laws of Nature. This story even offends the law of logic. Twelve loaves are twelve. They cannot even be 13 or 14, how could they be twelve hundred or more.

A STUDENT.—Sir, if the saints or prophets cannot achieve miracles, how can they then be called superior to us ordinary people ? Those united with God ought to be above and beyond Nature. The laws of Nature must obey them and not rule them.

TEACHER.—Such is not the fact. We call a great wrestler great not because he becomes above the laws of Nature but because he has followed the laws of Nature and has built his body so well and so soundly that he is able to give a physical defeat to every other wrestler. His superiority consists in two things. First, he has built his body wonderfully well by following certain methods and secondly, he continues to follow these methods. These methods are nothing but laws of Nature. In the same way, we call a man great scientist,

not because he works the above-mentioned miracles but because by patiently and faithfully following certain natural processes he has acquired the mental capacity of discovering truth. His superiority lies therefore in his evolved capacity. We trust him because of that great ability which we do not possess. In the same way we consider a man morally high because even under temptation he does not give way to his weaknesses and thereby break the sacred social and moral laws. We call him honest because he overcomes temptations of dishonesty in money-dealings. We call him chaste because he controls his sexual passions in a way so as not to hurt a woman. We call a man just because he respects the rights of others and has a square and fair deal with others. We call a man a great reformer because he has the courage to stand against prevalent social wrongs. It is these noble virtues which make a man moral and not because such a moral giant claims to have achieved the above-mentioned miracles. In the same way we call a man a spiritual being because he loves devotedly and whole-heartedly to do unselfish service of humanity. You have read the story of Abu Ben Adam. He had two definite dreams. In one dream he saw an angel recording the names of the chosen people. Abu Ben Adam asked of the recording angel if his name was there. The angel said, "Your name is not among the servants of God." Abu Ben Adam then said, "Put my name, then among the servants of humanity." In the second dream, again, he saw the same angel recording something. Abu Ben Adam then asked him what he was recording. He made the same reply as in the first dream. Abu Ben Adam then asked, "Is my name anywhere?" "Your name is at the top," said the angel. *This means highest spirituality consists in the service of humanity.* He who contributes most to the well-being of mankind is the greatest spiritual man. Hence we have to judge spirituality of any person by the number and quality of the altruistic forces and above all divine forces he possesses and not by offending the laws of Nature. Laws of Nature can never be violated. Nobody can rise above them. To entertain any such claim about a spiritual being is to place him on a false altar. In course of time, this impossible claim robs the saint or sage of even the spiritual values. They are

not, therefore, friends but enemies of their teachers who entertain such absurd claims about them. Let me once for all tell you that a spiritual being is one who possesses some definitely higher and altruistic virtues. He who has not served mankind but has passed his entire life, self-contained in the so-called meditation and contemplation or devotion, has lost a great privilege in life. He has gained selfishness and not spirituality. No body can grow alone. We can grow only with others. Hence for our growth we must have altruistic powers. He who is devoid of these powers is devoid of spirituality.

A STUDENT.—This is a new conception of spirituality, Sir.

TEACHER.—People like Abu Ben Adam had faintly perceived it. Here and there we come across this or that thinker laying stress upon the development of altruistic powers as a sure way to gain spirituality. It was given to Devatma to give us the complete, fuller, and richer conception of spirituality. According to him the true spirituality does not even begin in a heart which is void of altruistic forces. There are qualities and varieties of altruistic forces but higher or spiritual life commences with the altruistic forces. This is why in our society greatest stress is laid on getting out of selfishness. Among the basic soul-diseases mentioned by the Devatma, selfishness is one. By means of altruistic forces we can destroy this selfishness. Selfishness is fatal to spirituality. Hence it is that I repeatedly emphasize this truth that the greatness of a religious soul does not consist in his ability to go above the laws of Nature. It lies in the growth of the number and quality of altruistic forces which aims at destroying his selfishness absolutely. *Altruism is hall-mark of spirituality.*

A STUDENT.—What becomes then, Sir, of all those millions of people who are not only self-centered and utterly selfish but who instead of doing good to others trespass upon their just rights.

TEACHER.—They are lying far flung away from the regions of spirituality.

A STUDENT.—But, Sir, they read scriptures all right. They offer prayers. They keep great fasts. They visit places of pilgrimage. They even give something in charity. Are they not at all spiritual people ?

TEACHER.—A man who commits crimes has no spirituality.

A thief has no religion. A dishonest and corrupt man has no religion. A debauchee has no religion. A clever man who cheats others has no religion. In a word, a bad man has no religion. In the same way or truer than that, he is not spiritual at all who lives for himself and for his wife and children. Spirituality starts with altruistic forces of love for the ideal being and love of doing good to others—with disinterested service of others. A man who has not even made a start should never expect to reach the goal. There are millions who are not even moral, what to speak of being spiritual. A spirituality divorced of morality is something tainted, something to be viewed with suspicion or mistrust. Hence moral and altruistic life alone helps us to go the way of spirituality. By this standard are all the saints and sages to be measured and tested and believed.

## FAITH IN SOME FUNDAMENTL TRUTHS

A STUDENT.—Sir, besides putting our faith in several persons who deserve our faith, are we required, in the interests of our life, to place our faith and unshakeable faith in something else ?

TEACHER.—Yes, it is essential for us to put our faith in the reality of Nature.

A STUDENT.—What is meant by Nature, Sir, and what is meant by its reality ?

TEACHER.—Nature is a name which we give to that one complete existence or indivisible whole which comprises of all visible and non-visible, all living and non-living beings whenever and wherever existing in space and time and which is composed of all kinds of matter whether gross or refined, whether solid, liquid, gaseous etc., and of all kinds of forces living or non-living which exhibit themselves in attractions and repulsions. Matter and force of which Nature is composed never get destroyed or extinct. The sum total of all matter and all force has been the same in the past as it is today. It shall always remain the same in the future also. Hence Nature, which is composed of them, is eternal and self-existing. This Nature which is eternal, self-existing and infinite is the one greatest reality.

A STUDENT.—Why should we have faith in Nature as the great reality ?

TEACHER.—We are every moment of our life living, moving and having our being in Nature. If we ignore the reality of Nature, we shall have to ignore the reality of everything in Nature. Once we do so our life becomes impossible. If we hope to live, we have to accept food as real, drink as real, air as real, water as real, sun as real, and all kinds of lights as real.



If we mistake food for poison, water for a burning lava, pure air for carbon dioxide, light for darkness and live up to this delusion we shall refuse to take food, drink water, breathe air, live in light and thus end our existence. Even those who have endeavoured to believe in their philosophic speculation that the whole world is unreal had yet common sense enough to distinguish between food and poison and thus have taken food and eschewed poison. They have had common sense enough to distinguish between sanitary and insanitary conditions and thereby have lived in the former conditions and avoided the latter. They have had common sense enough to distinguish between good men and bad men and have associated with one and shunned the company of the other. They have had common sense enough to distinguish between right and wrong conduct towards others whom they believed to be real and thereby have moulded their lives by accepting right principles and by giving up the wrong ones. If their common sense had not helped them they would have made a mess of their lives. All phases of our life depend upon right and higher distinctions. We have to distinguish food from poison in order to live physically. We have to distinguish men from animals and thereby develop social connections with men. We have to distinguish between good men and bad men for our own preservation and protection of our families. We have to distinguish between right and wrong conduct if we are to live moral life and avoid immoral life. We have to distinguish between egoism and altruism and get rid of the slavery to the one and evolve the other if we want to step into spiritual life. All these distinctions are essential for our existence. These distinctions are possible only if we accept the reality of Nature and its existences. Once we live up to the horrible delusions of considering all objects and persons as unreal, we shall lose all sense of distinctions. In that case talk of morality and spirituality would be merely a waste of time.

A STUDENT.—Have we got to put faith in something else also?

TEACHER.—Yes, there are certain other truths also in which we have to put our faith. We have to realize the truth that one great law of Nature which governs all the kingdoms in Nature and all the living and non-living beings is the law of change or

variation. This change or variation is universal. It takes place under the operation of certain fixed processes or methods which are called universal laws of Nature. This change is not of the same kind. Under the operation of the universal laws of Nature this change or variation either makes the things better in form and qualities or worse in form and qualities. The change that makes for betterment is called the evolutionary or the upward or progressive change. The change that degrades a thing in form or quality is called devolutionary or downward or degenerative change. The former change is called constructive change, and the latter change is called destructive change. That great process which brings about betterment in the forms and qualities of various objects has definitely one goal towards which it is unconsciously aiming. This great process brings about gradual change towards betterment in its various parts. It is due to this great process that from diffused and disorganised matter called Nebula organised solar worlds like ours are formed. It is due to the operations of this process that from the non-living forces, inorganic and organic living forces have evolved on the surface of this earth and from organic living forces innumerable living bodies in the vegetable, animal and human kingdoms have evolved. The destination towards which this process seems to be bound is that of building objects and kingdoms from incompleteness of forms and qualities towards completion of forms and qualities, from the state of disharmony towards higher harmony. Realizing this fact, it is essential for us to put our faith in the truth that all such individuals who live their life in co-operation with this great process can grow better. And any individual who is blind to this process and in his blindness obstructs or lives his life in opposition to this great evolutionary or constructive process degrades or worsens his life.

A STUDENT.—Please make this truth more explicit.

TEACHER.—It is now a common fact that there is no break in the continuity of the process of evolution. We have, therefore, to accept the fact that from non-living force or forces, life-forces have evolved. The one great property which demarcates the living from the non-living is the capacity of response. According to the same continuity of law this organized life-force builds living bodies. This life-force with its living body came to

be called a unicellular being. These unicellular beings were of two kinds. From the one the entire vegetable world has grown, and from the other kind of the unicellular beings, the entire animal world has grown. By the same continuity of evolution, human world has evolved out of animal world by a growth of one great quality in its mental make up called progressive mental powers which helped it to explore the laws of Nature and exploit them to his requirements. Now that process which led to the betterment of forms and qualities and, therefore, birth and growth of progressive species is definitely called a constructive or evolutionary process. We have all progressed in obedience to the working of this unique process. This process is eternal and immutable. If we want to live and progress, we have to harmonize our lives with this process. This process definitely tells us that if we help in the betterment of forms and qualities of others, we shall grow better but if we harm the forms and qualities of others, we shall grow worse. Hence we should develop altruistic forces to become better. This is a great truth which we have to realize for our highest good. There is no escape from this. Those individuals or nations suffer who ignore this law. Moral forces have their glory because they help us to respect other existences, their rights and privileges and they save us from harming others. Spiritual forces gain their glory because under their direction man becomes inherently urged to serve other existences, that is, better their forms and qualities. The highest goal of man should be the knowledge of all such forces and the evolution of all such soul-forces which harmonize our life with this unique process of evolution.

A STUDENT.—If the whole world, Sir, were to realize this truth and live it, there would be no sins and crimes. There would be no longer any transgressions of the rights of others. There would be no longer any trampling under foot the bodies and feelings of others. All would be busy in helping one another. A reign of higher harmony and highest good-will would prevail. We shall have on this earth a heaven of far transcendental glory and importance than any heaven which the human imagination has conceived.

TEACHER.—This is definitely the destination towards which the unique and universal process of evolution is tending. Hence it is that I want you to have faith that by co-operating with this

process alone, we can become better. And by militating against it we are bound to become worse. The present terribly misadjusted state which you find prevalent in human and sub-human worlds is due to the existence of objects and persons who are not only non-cooperating with this unique process but are defying it. The average among human beings are not able to realize the glory of this unique process. In their darkness they are developing low-loves and low-hates. These are terrible forces. They must make a man enemy of man and enemy of other kingdoms. Hence they have degraded all those millions of men whom they are dominating. May they awaken to the horror of their position. And instead of finding joy in harming others they may find joy in helping others. This blissful state is possible only when they get freedom from low-loves and low-hates and develop altruistic forces. This is why I have been trying to emphasize the truth that life of low-loves and low-hates leads to degeneration and death and, therefore, it is our bounden duty to get free from them and evolve altruistic forces.

A STUDENT. —In everyday life, Sir, we see that those who indulge in untruth gain in wealth, in position, in titles, in property, in social status, in reputation and even in importance. Sir, I am a son of a lawyer. My father and his friends are generally busy in talking about cases. I hear them. They say that in civil and criminal courts the cases are decided not only on evidence, but on the character of the judges. They sometimes lament that this or that judge is corrupt and that a truly guilty person gets off by paying bribes and truly innocent man goes to jail because the other side bribed the magistrate. One day I was astonished to hear the pleaders talking in a bar room that 50 per cent guilty persons get off and 50 per cent innocent men get in. So far evidence is concerned, most of the witnesses tell lies. There are scores of people in every district who are professional witnesses. They give false evidence on payment. Besides this, I went into a town where my relations live. I saw a red building. It was the property of a retired Government official. Everybody said that the officer had amassed lakhs by bribes and had built that mansion. In almost all *biradaries* people enquire about the riches of the others and not about their

character. Hence we young men are encouraged to earn wealth by all means. Even our own elders tell us that honesty and starvation go together and that they are twin born. All this tells us that evil pays and goodness does not pay.

TEACHER.—It is true that in the world majority of men are indulging in untruth. It is also true that those who have risen in wealth and in importance have been banking on untruth. It is true that those who want to gain worldly importance find truth uncomfortable. They want to strangle it out of existence. In spite of all this, I affirm that untruth shall not ultimately prevail. There are certain things which we have to take in view. Walpole in English history believed in corruption. He openly said that every man had his price. He used to pay the price. He had succeeded. But if there is Walpole there is also Earl of Chatham. He was strictly honest. He hated corruption. He also succeeded. He proved by his life that even victory in the world is possible by honesty, integrity and upright conduct. Take another case. In contrast to hundreds of lawyers, you have before you the life Shri G.V. Mavalankar, the great Congress leader (later Speaker of the Indian Parliament), who rose into eminence in law, even when he kept to the highest ethical conduct in conducting his cases. It is, therefore, false to believe that success in world is possible *only* by untruth. In the worldly success, there are several other factors which help man to rise. The great mental ability of a man, his robust common sense, his resourcefulness, his dash, his untiring energy, his perseverance all combine to help him to rise. Because this man adds also untruth to his other qualities, the world ignores these other qualities and falsely concludes that untruth has helped the man. It is sad that these capable men demean themselves by untruth. They could succeed better if they could add honesty to their other virtues. The tragedy is that they have no faith in the strength of truth, the strength of upright conduct, the might of clean life. Wherever any person has added upright conduct to the other qualities, he has succeeded and wonderfully well. Hence the fallacy that you boys commit is that you believe that untruth was the *sole* or major cause of the man's success.

Besides this, what is the verdict of history. Under any circumstances history would prefer Earl of Chatham to Walpole. Shri Mavalankar will remain most respected in the

annals of law courts. The core of human heart is sound. It cries for an upright man. It gives immortal praise to an advocate of truth. A man pays his homage to a martyr to truth, though in his own weak life he is not able to live up to the ideal of his admiration. However, please try to understand me that I have never told you that truth always succeeds. What I tell you is that ultimate victory lies with truth.

A STUDENT.—What is meant by the ultimate victory, Sir.

TEACHER.—By ultimate victory, I mean, the final victory. If you simply understand what is meant by truth you will easily realize why it must prevail. Truth means what is. Falsehood or untruth means what is not. Now logic teaches us that whatever is, *is*, and whatever is not, *is not*. When we say that whatever is, *is*, we mean that it exists as a reality. Whatever is, *is* real. Unless we accept the identity of an object or a law, all thought would be impossible. Now, what do we mean by true knowledge? True knowledge means the knowledge of the facts, phenomena and laws in Nature as they are. The pencil with which you are taking down notes, is made up of wood and graphite. To know it as such and realize it as such, is to get a true knowledge of it. To believe that it is made up of clay and iron, paper and coal, brass and copper or gold and silver etc., is to have false belief. From this it is apparent that truth is what is and its knowledge is called true knowledge. In true knowledge lies the highest good of man and in false belief lies a danger for him. Even if by mistake we accept what is poison for food and take it, we suffer. When the antelope or jungle deer mistakenly takes mirage for water it suffers. It races towards it. The more it runs after it, the more the apparent water flies away from it. Worn out with thirst and fatigue the poor animal dies. False belief, therefore, proves death for one led by it.

A STUDENT.—Sir, when our highest good lies in true knowledge why does not every man accept it?

TEACHER.—In order to accept a truth, man should possess corresponding powers. A man born blind, cannot accept the truth of the beauty and colour in things and objects. In the same way, a man devoid of evolved mental powers cannot penetrate into Nature and exploit its truths. At one time the whole mankind believed that earth was an outstretched plane,

when we know that it is a rounded ball. This is because the whole mankind was not able to see this truth. But this truth did not vanish. The truth was shining by its own light. It was maintaining its identity. It needed evolved man to see and proclaim it. Such an evolved man comes on the human stage as a rare gem. But he comes. He sees the truth. Its glory entrances him. His awakened love for it compels the homage of his heart. This benefactor of humanity stands up. He preaches the truth. His voice at first jars on humanity. But his admirers swell. The conflict begins. A regular war takes place between the devotees of truth and the partisans of falsehood. The lovers of falsehood are many. They command the wealth and other resources. They get princes to back them up. They kill or burn or imprison many a devotee of truth. The war ends. The devotees of truth, though few and insignificant, give ultimately a crushing defeat to the overwhelming numbers of the lovers of falsehood. Why do the lovers of truth, though few and insignificant at the start, gather force and win victory? This is because truth is light. It must dispel clouds of darkness. It is because truth serves the highest interests of man. Hence, on awakening to its reality, man is compelled to accept it for he sees that in not accepting it lies his death. Hence, the light of the truth and the highest interest of awakened man, prove mighty enough to overcome darkness of untruth. This is why several truths have come to be accepted even though they are opposed to religious or theological teachings.

A STUDENT.—You mean to say, Sir, that truths have always been existing long before man came to the earth.

TEACHER.—Yes, it is so. The truths were there, are there and shall be there. Their existence is not dependent upon man's belief. They are self-luminous. They have light of their own. They do not rest on man for this light. Man depends on them. Man needs the knowledge of truths and he has to humbly seek them and he has to humbly accept them for his own good.

A STUDENT.—Do you think, Sir, it was also inevitable for higher men to rise and wake up to the glory of these truths?

TEACHER.—Yes, it was inevitable. The higher process of evolution cannot stop in its course. It has produced man

out of animals, it was bound to produce higher men from lower men and still higher people to explore its truths, to accept them and thus march upwards in the scale of growth. It is impossible for man to subsist on falsehood. It is impossible for man to grow on falsehood. Hence to get humanity out from the ruts of falsehood, the rise of the lovers of true knowledge is and will always be inevitable. Hence truths and lovers of truths shall come on human firmament and illumine the world. No individual or combination of men singly or collectively can stop these two inevitable phenomena. You must, therefore, develop a robust faith that truths shall prevail and untruth shall vanish.

You must try to understand that love of goodness and love of evil are two contradictory forces. It is inevitable for them to come into conflict. Please believe and that too strongly that in this conflict between goodness and evil, the ultimate victory inevitably goes to the lovers and champions of goodness and ultimate disgrace and defeat inevitably visits the heads of the lovers and champions of evil.

A STUDENT.—Is there any law in Nature, Sir, that evil must become disgraced and goodness must become triumphant?

TEACHER.—Yes, there is. The universal process of evolution or development is unconquerable in its march. This process cannot be violated. It has been there before man or any existence appeared on this earth. It shall remain always and eternally. This process governs the law of life or construction. In the first place, this process by its very nature must produce higher and higher men who should love goodness. By the birth and thriving of such higher men there is a certainty of higher harmony coming to prevail in human relations. This process of evolution aims at harmony. Hence this harmony must come. It can come through goodness only and not through evil. Even now the higher humanity is crying for peace and higher adjustment. This voice must gather momentum. We should, therefore, all of us, co-operate with goodness as our highest interests lie in it.

A STUDENT.—Do you want us, Sir, to have faith in something else also?

TEACHER.—Our highest interest lies in our becoming good. Man has not made Nature. Man is the product of Nature. He



has appeared on this planet in conformity with its laws. He must discover those laws and obey them. I have told you before that higher process of evolution is there in Nature. We have to harmonize with it if we want to exist and grow. Being part of Nature we have to build others and thereby as a necessary consequence build ourselves. We have to improve the form and qualities of others and thereby improve our lives. In order to do this work of building others we ought to develop altruistic forces. These forces destroy evil and produce good. Hence for our highest interest, we must develop evil-destroying and good-producing forces. In a word, we must become good. This is why I told you that our best interest lies in becoming good. What if I gain the whole earth and get dominated by evil-producing low-loves and low-hates. The earth can never be mine. I must part with it at least after death. But my evil nature is with me. What a bad bargain it is to gain the world which can never accompany us and in that mad pursuit lose our highest thing that is our noble life or higher character !

□□□



## GLOSSARY OF INDIAN WORDS

- Aggarwal*—A sub-caste of the third caste—*Vaish*—of Hindus.  
*Allah*—Arabic word for God.  
*Angrakha*—An oriental long coat with strings.  
*Ashram*—A religious place or a refuge for the helpless.  
*Avatar*—An incarnation of God.  
*Babu*—A clerk in an Indian office.  
*Bania*—A member of *Vaish* class engaged in business.  
*Baqr Id*—A Muslim festival which includes feasting on mutton.  
*Bazaar*—A shopping centre.  
*Bhakti Bhav*—Feelings of devotion.  
*Bhang*—Indian hemp used as intoxicant.  
*Bhatia*—A sub-caste of the second caste—*Kshatriya*—of Hindus.  
*Bhayya*—Servant.  
*Bhikshu*—Buddhist missionary.  
*Bhikshni*—Female Buddhist missionary.  
*Brahmin*—First caste of Hindus.  
*Chandu*—An intoxicant.  
*Charas*—An intoxicant.  
*Das*—Servant.  
*Dargah*—A tomb of a holy Muslim.  
*Dev Jyoti*—Sublime light.  
*Dev Tej*—Sublime power.  
*Dharamshala*—A free residence for travellers or visitors.  
*Faqir*—A wandering religious man claiming super-natural powers.  
*Guru*—Religious or revered guide.  
*Halal*—A slow and cruel butchering of an animal.  
*Halwa*—A sweet pudding prepared from wheat flour and butter.  
*Harem*—Residential quarters of the wives of a man.  
*Haveli*—An enclosed compound.  
*Indri*—Sense organ.  
*Jageer*—Assignment of a district and its revenue to one individual or body, with power to administer.  
*Jhatka*—A quick and sudden butchering of an animal.  
*Jirgah*—Assembly of Afghan headmen.  
*Kaffirs*—Non-believers in Quran.  
*Khalifa*—Successor of Mohammad.  
*Mahal*—Palace.

*Maharaja*—Title of a ruler of an Indian State.

*Mushaira*—Poetic symposium.

*Nambardar or Lambardar*—A headman of an Indian village.

*Naib Tehsildar*—Assistant collector of revenue.

*Panchayat*—Assembly of headmen in an Indian village.

*Pandit*—A title for those belonging to Brahmin caste. Also one who performs religious ceremonies.

*Panjiri*—A fried sweet prepared from flour, butter and sugar.

*Purdah*—Seclusion of woman by veil or confinement in house.

*Parlok*—A place of stay for people after death.

*Pathan*—An inhabitant of Frontier State.

*Patwari*—A junior revenue officer.

*Pir*—A Muslim priest.

*Prohit*—One whose profession is to perform religious rites.

*Punjabi*—A resident of Punjab, a state of Northern India.

*Qazi*—A Muslim priest and magistrate during the Muslim rule.

*Rai Bahadur*—An Indian title.

*Rakhi*—A Hindu festival in which a sister ties a decorated thread on her brother's wrist as a token of her tender love and the brother offers something as a token of his happy obligation of protection and service to her. Also the thread is so named.

*Sadhu*—A Hindu ascetic who has discarded social obligations.

*Sadhani*—A female *sadhu*.

*Sandhya*--Religious meditation.

*Sanyasi*—A Hindu devotee who completely retires into meditation.

*Sanyasini*—A female Sanyasi.

*Sarai*—A rent-free place of stay for travellers and visitors.

*Sari*—An Indian woman's length cloth draped round her whole body.

*Sati*—A ceremony in which the wife was burnt alive or even burnt herself alive, on the funeral pyre of her husband.

*Satyagrah*—Literally means to stand by truth. Practically it means non-violent defence of one's right.

*Seth*—A rich man in business.

*Shrimanjee*—A respectful way of address, like 'Sir.'

*Sufi*—A Muslim mystic.

*Tehsildar*—A revenue officer.

*Tongawala*—Driver of a horse-driven carriage.

*Vaishnavas*—Following the cult of Vaishnus—a devout-cult.

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